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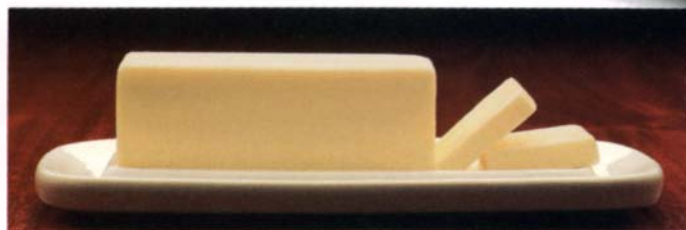
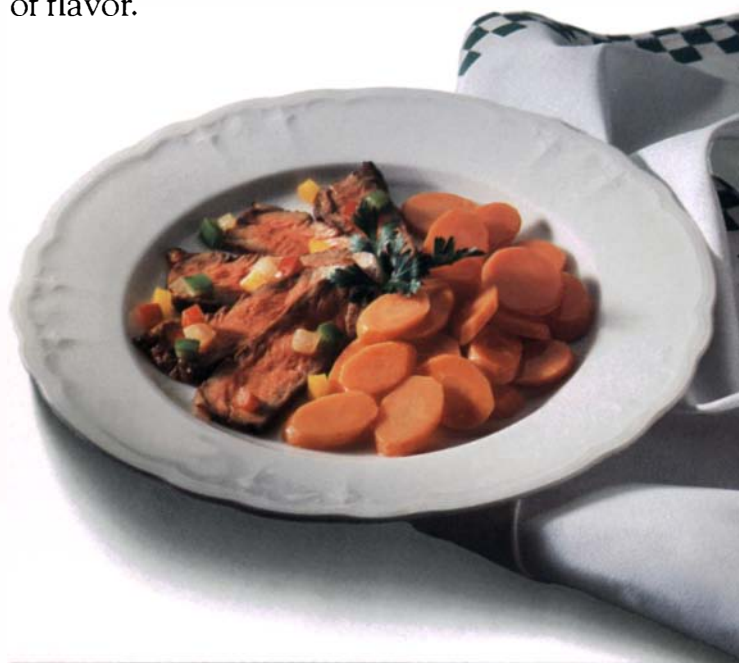
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**B U T T E R**

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JUNE/JULY 1994 ISSUE 3

## DEPARTMENTS

- 4 Letters
- 6 **Q&A** *Re-lining copper pans, freezing bread, white vs. black pepper, using leek tops, dairy-free cooking*
- 10 **Notes** *Balsamic vinegar, campaigning for pesticide-free food, the Wonder Cup*
- 12 **Food Science**  
*Controlling bacteria in food through temperature*
- 16 **Tips** *Drying and storing lettuce, cooling stock quickly, cutting cheesecake*
- 72 **Basics** *Trussing a roast, segmenting citrus fruit*
- 74 **Reviews**  
*How-to-cook books*
- 78 **Calendar**
- 80 **Flavorings**  
*Worcestershire sauce*
- 85 **Advertiser Index**
- 85 **Recipe Index**
- 86 **Tidbits**

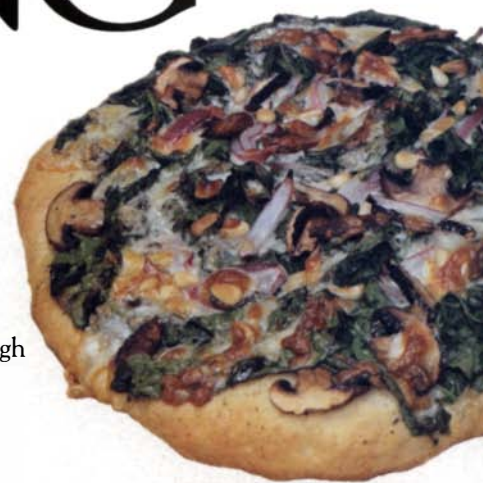
**On the cover:** *A Thai Menu*, p. 20; *Shortcakes*, p. 66.

Cover photo, Susan Kahn; inset, Robert Marsala.

Photos this page: top, Ruth Lively; center, Martha Holmberg; bottom, Suzanne Roman.

## ARTICLES

- 20 **The Vibrant Art of Thai Cooking** *by Arun Sampanthavivat*  
A variety of flavors, textures, and colors make a meal sparkle
- 26 **Creating Perfect Pizza Crust** *by Gay Chanler*  
Thin or thick, crisp or chewy—it's all in how you treat the dough  
**Pizza toppings** 29
- 30 **A Fresh Look at Sautés** *by Jean-Charles Berruet*  
A French chef puts his contemporary spin on classic methods
- 35 **Vegetables Make the Meal** *by Kaysey McLoughlin*  
Meatless main dish pleases the palate and the eye  
**Vegetable stock from peelings and parings** 37
- 38 **Making Flavorful Fruit Butters and Cheeses** *by Amanda Burton*  
Old-fashioned preserves for health-conscious cooks
- 42 **Jamaican-Style Barbecue** *by Jay B. McCarthy*  
Making and using hot and spicy "jerk"
- 46 **Turn Yogurt into Cheese** *by Anne Sterling*  
How can something so easy be so good—and low in fat, too?
- 48 **A Passion for Lobster** *by Sam Hayward*  
A Maine chef captures all the flavor from these expensive crustaceans
- 54 **Beyond Plain Pork** *by Hartmut Handke*  
A summer-vegetable stuffing adds moisture and flavor
- 58 **Savoring Some Sweets of the Vine** *by Robert Feinn*  
As aperitifs or after-dinner treats, these sweet wines make a meal great
- 61 **Smoking Fish at Home** *by Jay Harlow*  
Three simple methods for kitchen or yard  
**Serving hot-smoked fish** 64
- 66 **More Than Strawberry Shortcakes** *by Shannon McKinney*  
How to make the best shortcake ever and adapt it to your taste



26 **Perfecting Pizza**



30 **Updated Sautés**



48 **Lobster**

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## BAKING CHEMISTRY

Cynthia Hariu of Lynbrook, NY, asked for more on the chemistry of cooking. Two sources I've found helpful are *Practical Baking, 5th Edition*, by William J. Sultan, and the *King Arthur Flour 200th Anniversary Cookbook*. The latter also has a small bimonthly newsletter called "The Baking Sheet."

—Gayle Gookin, Loveland, CO

**Editor's note:** If these books are unavailable locally, you can order *Practical Baking* by calling 800/842-3636 and *King Arthur* by calling 800/827-6836.

## WEIGHT AND MEASUREMENT

I enjoy flour-based recipes for things like bread and pasta, but would you consider stating the weight of the ingredients in these recipes?

—Rob Bruno, Huntington Beach, CA

**Editor's note:** We share Mr. Bruno's concern for accuracy in measuring dry ingredients used in baking and pastry making. Measuring ingredients like flour, cornstarch, or chopped nuts by volume (with a measuring cup) is not always accurate because the ingredient may take up more or less volume depending on how compact or aerated it is. Measuring by weight (with a scale) should give you the precise amount of each ingredient each time you measure.

Because not every cook owns a scale, we will list the weight (in ounces or pounds) and the volume (in tablespoons or cups) for dry ingredients in recipes in which they play a critical role. We will not include weight measure where precision is less important, however, such as for flour used for dredging or chopped nuts for decoration.

## MORE GLUTEN TIPS

To follow up Prof. Ponte's gluten article (Food Science, *Fine Cooking* #1), here's additional information about two aspects of gluten that affect cooks: how gluten-forming proteins absorb water, and how

sugar interferes with gluten formation.

When proteins in flour join with each other and water, they form gluten. This means a high-protein flour will absorb much more water than a low-protein flour. It takes about 2 cups of high-protein flour to absorb 1 cup of liquid, while it takes about 2½ cups of low-protein flour to absorb 1 cup of liquid. (Cooks have known for thousands of years that one flour absorbs more water than another, but this frequently was blamed on humidity.) This difference between flours' water-absorbing qualities can create problems in writing and following recipes.

If there's a lot of sugar in a dough, gluten-forming proteins will combine with the sugar instead of each other. When a yeast dough contains more than 2 tablespoons of sugar for every cup of flour, the bread will be heavy because the gluten hasn't formed a good network in which to capture enough gases from the yeast to rise properly. On the positive side, sugar's gluten-interfering qualities also make cakes and pie crusts more tender.

—Shirley O. Corriher, Atlanta, GA

## ERRATA

• In the recipe for Lemon Sponge Cake in a Roasted-Almond Crust (*Fine Cooking* #1, p. 70), the cake flour and cornstarch volume measurements were incorrect. The correct quantities are:

2¼ oz. (½ cup plus 2 Tbs.) cake flour  
2 oz. (½ cup plus 1 Tbs.) cornstarch

• The telephone number for Mo Hotta-Mo Betta on p. 34 of *Fine Cooking* #1 was incorrect. The correct phone number is 800/462-3220. ♦

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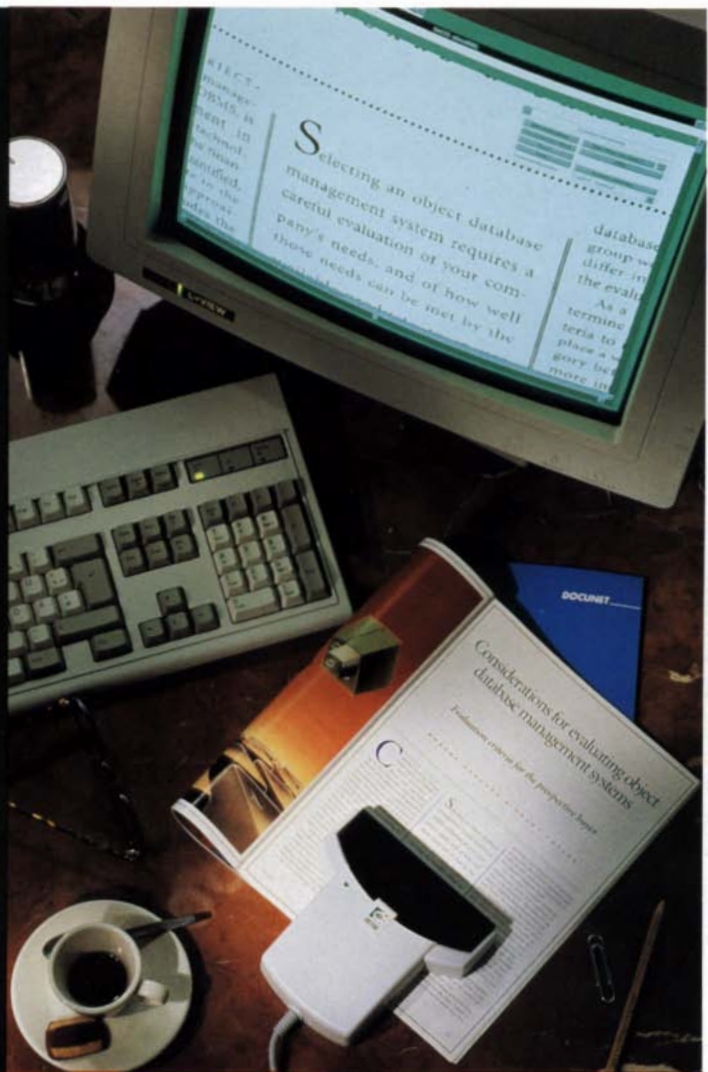
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### **FREEZING BREAD**

*Do nutrient levels in bread decrease when it's frozen?*

—Barbara Van Kirk, Roxbury, CT

**Jane Davis replies:** Proteins and carbohydrates in breads will not degrade by freezing, though the vitamin levels may be diminished. Freezing protects fatty elements in bread, like wheat germ, nuts, and cheese, keeping them from becoming rancid. Freezing also slows bread's staling process. When baked goods leave the oven, the water trapped by the baking process continues to evaporate, but the speed at which this happens depends on the ambient temperature. Bread, especially a handmade yeast bread, will keep well at room temperature for days, but for longer keeping, the freezer is far better than a refrigerator. Refrigerators (at about 40°F) will quicken the staling process and your bread will dry out fast.

Jane Davis owns *Ganache*, a bakery in Evanston, Illinois.

### **WHITE VS. BLACK PEPPER**

*I know black and white pepper have different flavors, but do they come from the same plant?*

—Lynn Harris, Fort Worth, TX

**Carol Ann Rinzler replies:** Peppercorns are berries from the tropical vine *Piper*

*nigrum*. Black peppercorns are berries that are picked before ripening and then dried. White peppercorns are mature berries that are soaked in water and stripped of their dark outer covering before being dried.

The two peppers have slight differences in taste and aroma. Beyond taste, however, the pepper you use also comes down to a matter of aesthetics. Many cooks think white pepper looks more attractive and less distracting than black pepper on light-colored dishes, such as poached fish or white sauces.

Incidentally, all peppercorns are at their best when freshly ground in a metal pepper mill. Wooden mills absorb peppercorn oils, which may create a residue that is impossible to clean. Plastic mills also absorb oils but are somewhat easier to clean.

Carol Ann Rinzler is the author of 13 books on food and health, including *The Complete Book of Herbs, Spices, and Condiments (Facts on File, 1990)*.

### **DAIRY-FREE COOKING**

*I have a severe allergy to all milk products. Can you help me find recipes that are milk-free, but not vegetarian or meat-and-potatoes?*

—Joan Tatum, Piketon, OH

**Nach Waxman replies:** Two useful dairy-free books are *The Milk-Free Kitchen*, by Beth Kidder, and *The Dairy-Free Cookbook*, by Jane Zukin. Each book has its own virtues. *The Milk-Free Kitchen* (H. Holt & Co., 1991. \$16.95, softcover; 480 pp. ISBN 0-8050-1836-0) generally has stronger and more interesting recipes—some 450 of them, including

many baking recipes. As a cookbook, Zukin's *Dairy-Free Cookbook* (Prima, 1991. \$14.95, softcover; 300 pp. ISBN 1-55958-088-7) is not as satisfying, but it offers 75 pages of extremely helpful introductory material, including charts, suppliers, a discussion of causes and strategies, and so forth. I would suggest that either be used primarily as a guide to cooking methods. These books provide many tips, tricks, and substitutions that may be all you need to convert the recipes you already know and love. There's no reason to disregard many of your old favorites.

Nach Waxman is the owner of *Kitchen Arts & Letters*, a Manhattan bookstore devoted to books about food and cooking.

### **RE-LINING COPPER PANS**

*I have some heavy pans in which the tin lining has worn away and the copper is showing through. Should I have them re-lined? Where can I have this done, and how much might it cost? Is it unhealthy to cook with copper exposed?*

—Grace Low, Eugene, OR

**Judie Hansen replies:** Copper is unbeatable for cooking because it conducts heat so evenly. Tin-lined pans are wonderful, but the lining may be harmed by temperatures higher than 405°F, or by long use. You should have your pans retinned because exposed copper can be toxic.

The cost of retinning is about half the cost of a new pan. Any silversmith should be able to provide this service. Look in the Yellow Pages, or call the best cookware store in your area and see whom they recommend. In the future,

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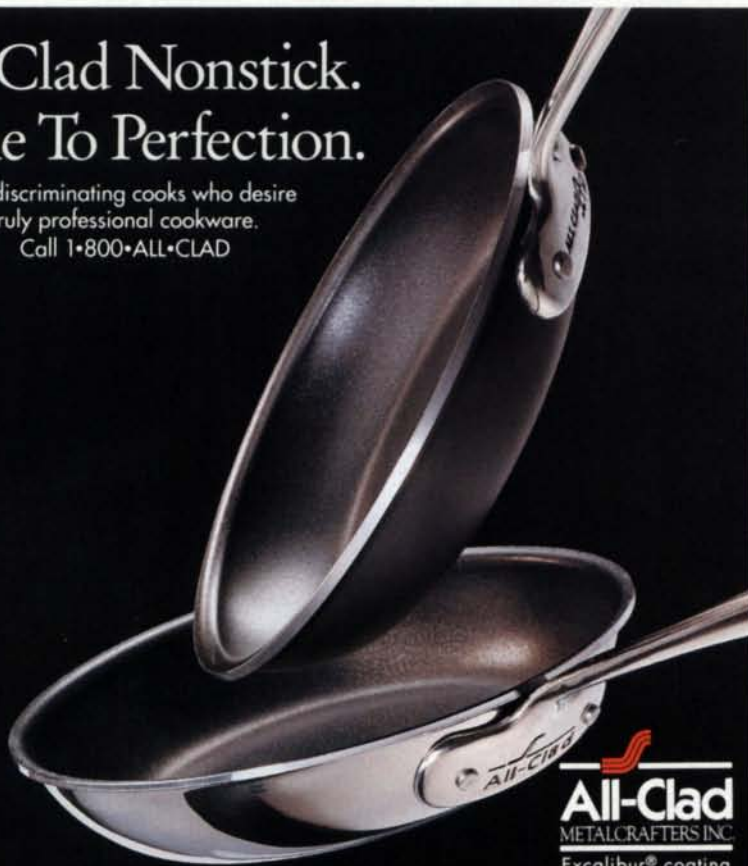
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*Judie Hansen is the assistant to the owner of Sur La Table, a cookware and kitchen-supply store in Seattle, Washington.*

#### RICOTTA SALATA

**On restaurant menus and in some recipes, I keep seeing "ricotta salata." What is it and how do you use it?**

—C. Bender, Culver City, CA

**Paula Lambert replies:** Ricotta salata is a dry, firm ricotta that's good for grating over salads and pasta dishes. It's typically an Italian sheep's-milk ricotta that's salted, pressed, drained of most of its moisture, and aged until it is hard and develops a sharp, piquant flavor. It has a dry consistency, no rind, is very white, and cylindrical in shape. It has a distinctive sheep's-milk flavor somewhat similar to pecorino romano.

The name "ricotta" comes from the

Italian word that means "to recook." Ricotta is made from whey that remains after cheese curds are either separated or drained. The whey is reheated (or "recooked") to become ricotta. When made from whey alone, true Italian ricotta is an excellent low-fat cheese. American ricotta, however, often made from cow's milk, and has a higher milk-fat content.

*Paula Lambert is the founder and president of The Mozzarella Company in Dallas, Texas.*

#### HOW TO USE LEEK TOPS

**Many recipes for leeks implore you to save the leek tops for soup. How should I use them?**

—Peter Lindsay, Toronto, ON

**Lucia Watson replies:** You can simmer and purée fresh leek tops with other vegetables for any smooth soup in which you'd like the leek's green color and mild onion flavor. You also can use chopped leek tops in soups such as chicken lemon-grass or beef vegetable.

Fresh leek tops also make a great addition to the stockpot. Add them to fresh aromatic vegetables (carrots, celery, onions), some herbs, whole unpeeled garlic, and perhaps a handful of dried beans (for body). Make the stock in any amount, but the water level should just cover the vegetables you're using. After the stock simmers for about an hour, strain it. The stock is ready to use. Unlike its source vegetables, the stock freezes very well—and it's much handier to have a freezer full of frozen stock than frozen vegetable scraps.

While fresh leek tops can contribute to soup, either as an actual ingredient or when used in the stock, frozen leek tops will do you no good at all. A defrosted leek top is a slimy thing, which only can make for a slimy product.

*Lucia Watson is the chef and owner of Lucia's Restaurant in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Her cookbook, Savoring the Seasons of the Northern Heartland, will be published by the Knopf Cooks American series this October. ♦*

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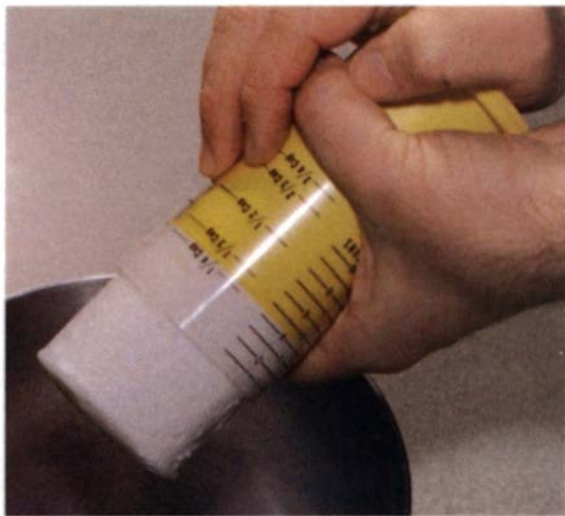
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Of course, the Wonder Cup measures liquids and dry ingredients, too (in cups, fluid ounces, tablespoons, teaspoons, and milliliters). You can buy the Wonder Cup from the manufacturer, Milmour Products, Inc., 8022 Ridgeway, Skokie, IL 60076; 708/676-3260. The one-cup



measure is \$2.69, and a two-cup version is \$4.10 (minimum order is \$10). The King Arthur Flour Baker's Catalogue (800/827-6836) also carries both sizes.

—Suzanne Roman, Fine Cooking

## Campaigning for Pesticide-Free Food

Frustrated that your local supermarket doesn't carry more organic foods? Wonder what pesticides are on the produce your store does carry? Send for the Mothers & Others Shoppers' Campaign for Better Food Choices Campaign Kit

for suggestions on what you can do about these issues.

Mothers & Others for a Livable Planet is a national consumer organization helping parents act on environmental issues that affect their families. The organization is working to forge consumer support for a shift from chemical-intensive farming to sustainable farming. Mothers & Others launched the *Shoppers' Campaign* to increase market demand for, and consumer access to, sustainably grown food that's free of dangerous pesticides.

The Campaign Kit tells you how to garner community support and approach the supermarket management to get the store to stock more locally grown and organic foods. The kit contains materials to leave with the manager and produce buyer, including marketing tips from successful mainstream merchants who carry organic foods, information on pesticides that pose high risk to children, and a list of organic suppliers with which the store can work.

The kit is available for \$3 from Mothers & Others, 40 W. 20th St., New York, NY 10011; 212/727-4474. Mothers & Others also publishes a bimonthly newsletter, timely legislative alerts, and the book *The Way We Grow: Good-Sense Solutions for Protecting Our Families from Pesticides in Food*.

—Suzanne Roman, Fine Cooking

## Balsamic Vinegar

Balsamic vinegar has become an increasingly popular condiment for its woody, sweet-tart flavor, but you may not know what "real" balsamic vinegar tastes like. Made from concentrated white grape juice and aged in wooden barrels for at least twelve years, artisan-quality balsamic vinegar is fine enough to sip as a liqueur. A tiny flask of "true" balsamic vinegar from the Italian regions of Modena and Reggio costs \$125 to \$180.



Mass-produced balsamic vinegars cost much less. The best of these combine high-quality wine vinegar, cooked-down grape must, young balsamic vinegar, and caramel for color and flavoring. The worst are made from cheap wine vinegar, sugar, and caramel coloring.

Lungarotti Balsamic Grape Sauce falls between artisan and mass production. Compared to its pedigreed competition, Lungarotti is a steal at \$45 for a 130ml bottle (just over ½ cup). It's a good choice

for those who want to experience a high-quality balsamic vinegar at a lesser price. The respected wine-producing Lungarotti family of Perugia, Italy, makes this balsamic in the same manner as the artisans of Modena and Reggio. (Lungarotti's vinegar can't be labeled "balsamic vinegar" because it isn't produced in these regions, hence the name "grape sauce.")

Lungarotti tastes rich and complex. In my kitchen, I didn't blend or cook the vinegar; rather, I used it as is to showcase its delicate qualities. A few drops of the vinegar are a wonderful condiment for beef tenderloin or veal chops. A simple toss of Lungarotti with blanched and cooled vegetables creates delicious results.

When I marinated strawberries for a half hour with a tablespoon of the Lungarotti, the berries became delightfully sticky, with a sweet and savory juiciness. I look forward to treating fresh cherries the same way.

While I wouldn't use a \$5 tablespoon of balsamic to make a vinaigrette, Lungarotti provides a flavor that mass-produced balsamic vinegars can't touch.

To find out where you can buy Lungarotti Balsamic Grape Sauce, contact the distributor, Mauro & P. Associates at 212/629-3411. It's also available by mail from Dean & DeLuca (800/221-7714).

—Jack Johnston, chef, Parigi, Dallas, Texas ♦





These Fiesta Pork Burritos are as delicious as they are easy. All it takes is some fresh, lean, boneless pork and a few other easy ingredients. You'll have dinner rolled up in no time. Preparation and cooking time: 15 minutes.

## Fiesta Pork Burritos

Slice about a pound of boneless **pork loin** into strips and stir-fry with one teaspoon **vegetable oil** and sliced **onion**. Stir in an 11-ounce can of drained **corn** and toss with two teaspoons **taco seasoning**. Roll up portions in four warmed **flour tortillas** and serve with salsa, rice and beans. Serves four.

Nutrient information, approximately, per serving: 418 cal.; 12 g. total fat; 3 g. saturated fat; 66 mg. cholesterol.

For recipes, send a self-addressed, stamped, business-size envelope to:  
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Nutrient analysis done by The Food Processor II Diet Analysis Software. Pork data from USDA Handbook 8-10 (1991).



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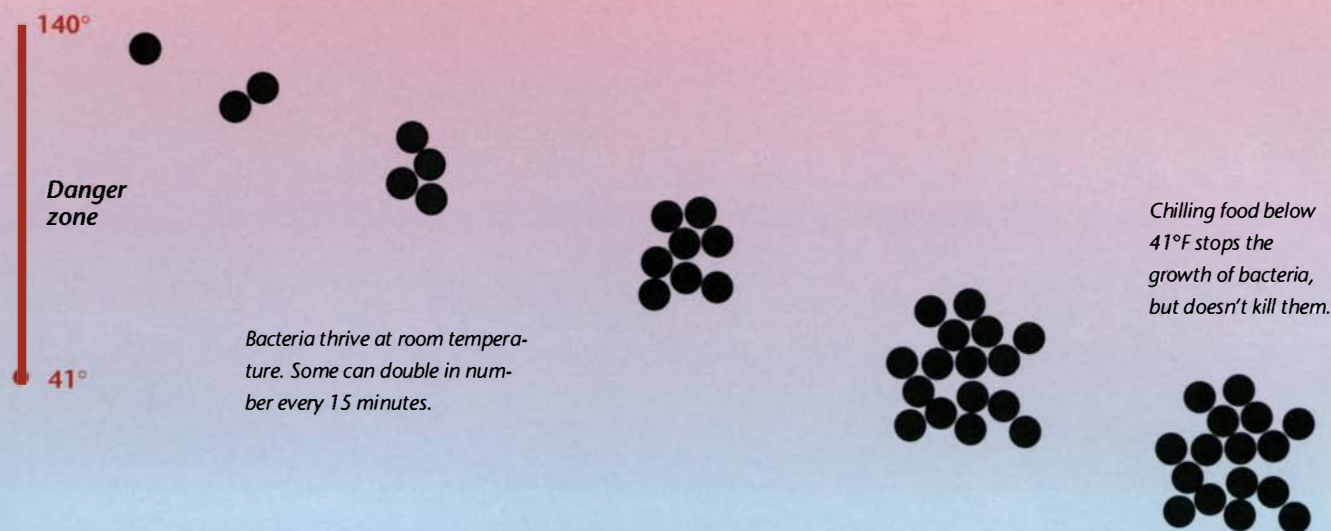


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# Controlling bacteria in food through temperature



Bacteria are a natural part of our world and we consume millions or billions every day without ill effects. For instance, some cheeses contain billions of harmless bacteria, which give the cheese its flavor. But some bacteria can harm humans. There may be as many as 80 million cases of food-borne disease in the United States every year, though the majority of infected people have mild symptoms and don't seek medical attention.

The bacteria that make you sick cannot be detected in or on food, except by special laboratory tests. Bad-smelling food, full of bacteria that cause spoiling, may be quite harmless. Conversely, the best-looking and -smelling food may contain harmful bacteria. Some bacteria, such as the *E. coli* strain that has recently made news, don't have to be able to grow (multiply) in the food, they just have to be there alive, and in very low numbers, to cause illness. Others, however, need to multiply to numbers sufficient to cause illness; lower numbers can be ingested without apparent ill effects. With some strains, the bacteria themselves are harmless, but the toxins they produce can make you sick. Most

foods can support the growth of some bacteria. Your best bet is to treat all foods, both raw and cooked—particularly those of animal origin—as though they do harbor harmful bacteria.

**Use extremes of hot and cold**—You can prevent bacteria from becoming a problem by controlling the temperature at which food is stored, cooked, and reheated. To deal effectively with those bacteria that must multiply in food to cause illness, keep food out of the “danger zone,” the range of temperatures at which bacteria multiply—between 41° and 140°F. Below 41°, most bacteria are still alive, but they're not multiplying—or not multiplying very fast. When food is heated above 140°, most bacteria are killed and are therefore no longer a problem. Between 41° and 140°, most bacteria live quite comfortably and reproduce vigorously. At typical summer temperatures, bacteria multiply very rapidly; some can double their populations every 10 or 15 minutes.

If food has been cooked, cooled, and reheated, it has passed through the danger zone twice—once as it cooled and once as it warmed up again—so any bacteria that survived the initial cooking or

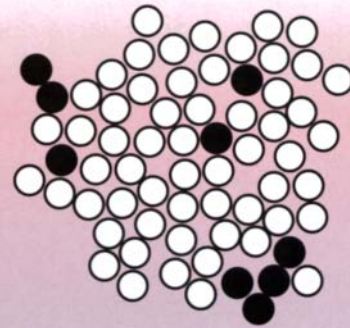
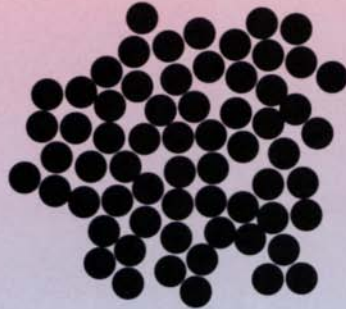
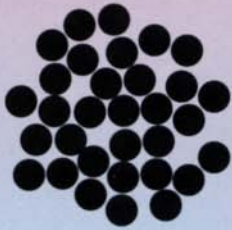
got in the food after it was cooked has had two chances to multiply and accumulate. Also, not all toxins produced by bacteria can be destroyed by heat—one more good reason to prevent bacteria from multiplying in the first place.

**Quick chilling**—To minimize time spent in this bacteria-friendly zone, chill food quickly. For nonliquid dishes, first quickly cool them to room temperature by spreading the food out in a thin layer on a plate or baking sheet, and then cover it and put it in the refrigerator. For stocks and soups, put the whole pot in an ice bath, and stir to quickly bring the temperature down before refrigerating.

**Killing bacteria with heat**—While cold temperatures keep the bacteria from multiplying, high temperatures are needed to actually kill them. Bacteria succumb to heat for the same reasons that any living cell does. Heat does physical damage to the bacterial cell's protective membranes, but more importantly, heat denatures proteins (see *Fine Cooking #2*). To carry out the functions of life, bacteria and other cells depend on proteins called enzymes. Enzymes are special proteins that catalyze chemical reactions. The sum of thousands of these



When food is reheated, the dormant bacteria begin to multiply again.



Heating food above 140° kills most bacteria and destroys some of the toxins the bacteria have produced.

reactions, catalyzed by hundreds to thousands of enzymes, are what define the organism's life. When the reactions stop, the organism dies. Heat disrupts the special three-dimensional structure of the bacterial cell's enzymes and renders them inactive. If enough enzymes are destroyed, the bacterium dies.

While most bacteria will die when they reach 140°, many can survive higher temperatures. Even bacteria of the same species (of which there are thousands) die at different rates. Bacteria are well adapted to survive. This is the reason that vigilance in cooking is stressed.

**Time is important, too**—Vigilance means controlling not just temperature, but time, too. Most recipes specify one cooking temperature and one fixed time. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration's *Food Code* 1993 now specifies flexible time/temperature combinations. (To get a copy, see the information at the end of the article.) Some foods can't be cooked at temperatures high enough to kill bacteria and still retain their sensory appeal. For example, the *Food Code* directs that ground meats should be cooked to heat all parts of the food to a temperature of 155° for

15 seconds. But to allow for flexibility in the kitchen, time/temperature combinations that are equivalent in their lethality for bacteria can also be used. The *Food Code* says that ground beef can be cooked to 150° for one minute, or to 145° for three minutes. For roast beef, equivalent lethality is delivered to bacteria when the roast is cooked so that all parts are heated to 145° for three minutes, or at the other time/temperature extreme, 130° for 121 minutes. Again, these two time/temperature combinations are equal in their ability to kill bacteria. Rare roast beef can be safely prepared by cooking at the lower temperature, but for a longer time. The chef's best insurance for proper cooking is a well-calibrated oven and a reliable cooking thermometer.

Microwave ovens cook differently than conventional ovens, and not every spot in the food may be equally heated by microwave cooking. That's why the *Food Code* specifies that the food must be rotated or stirred during cooking to compensate for uneven heat distribution. Food that is to be cooked in a microwave should also be covered to retain surface moisture because bacteria on a dry sur-

face are sometimes more resistant to heat; the food should be heated to temperatures 25° above the recommended conventional oven temperatures. After cooking, it's extremely important to let microwaved food stand covered for two minutes to let the temperature even out. This assures delivery of an adequate time/temperature combination.

The best and most current compilation of these time/temperature combinations and other food safety guidelines is the new *Food Code*, a guide for restaurants and retail outlets. This 430-page document is available on hard copy, on computer diskette, and through a computer modem from National Technical Information Service (NTIS) at 703/487-4650. The more you know about food-borne illness, the less likely it will affect you.

If you have questions about food-borne diseases, call the USDA's Meat and Poultry Hotline (800/535-4555), or the FDA's Seafood Hotline (800/FDA-4010).

—Douglas Archer, Ph.D., is the chair of the Food Science and Human Nutrition Department at the University of Florida in Gainesville. He previously served as the Deputy Director of the Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition at the FDA. ♦



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### ***Zuppa Fresca dell'Orto***

1 cup diced pink skinned potatoes, unpeeled	1 cup zucchini and/or yellow squash, quartered lengthwise and cut diagonally
1/2 cup diagonally sliced celery	1/2 cup diagonally sliced carrot
2 garlic cloves, minced	1/2 cup diagonally sliced asparagus spears
1/4 cup Bertolli Extra Virgin Olive Oil	1/2 cup diagonally sliced scallions
8 cups chicken stock, fat skimmed from surface	1/2 cup tiny peas, fresh or thawed frozen
1/4 tsp. saffron	1/3 cup diced plum tomatoes, peeled and seeded, fresh or canned (optional)
1 cup diagonally cut French green beans (slender)	Salt, pepper and Parmesan cheese, to taste
1/2 cup baby lima beans, fresh or thawed frozen	
3 Tbsp. orzo (rice shaped pasta)	
1 cup coarsely chopped hearts of escarole	

1. Combine potato, celery, carrot, garlic and olive oil in large broad saucepan. Cover; cook over low heat, stirring occasionally, until vegetables are tender, but not browned, about 10 min.

2. Add broth and saffron. Heat to boiling. Stir in green beans, lima beans, orzo. Cook, stirring, until tender, about 8 min. Add escarole; simmer 5 min.

3. Stir in zucchini and/or yellow squash, asparagus, scallions, green peas. Simmer just until tender and heated through, about 5 min. Add tomatoes, if using. Salt and pepper, to taste. Ladle into bowls. Serve sprinkled with slivers of Parmesan cheese. Serves 6-8.



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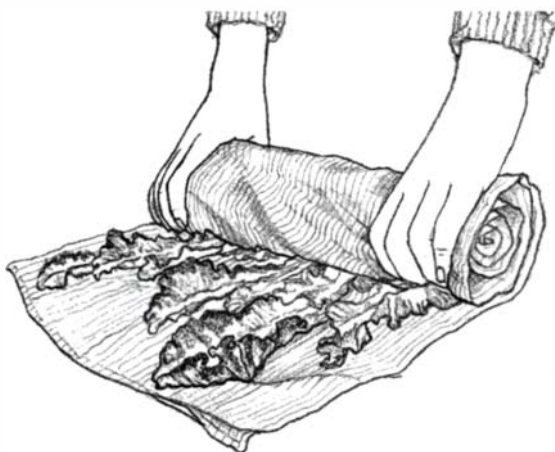
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## Drying and Storing Lettuce



Frustrated with drying each and every lettuce leaf with a paper towel, I came up with a method for drying lettuce that turned out to be a great way to store fresh salad greens and have them ready to serve on a moment's notice. Spread the wet greens out on a clean terry towel. Roll up the towel with the wet leaves tucked inside, as you would a jelly roll. Put the roll in the refrigerator on the lowest shelf. The towel acts as a wick, first absorbing the water clinging to freshly washed leaves, and then gradually feeding it back as the leaves need it. Later, when you unroll the towel, you'll have crisp, unblemished, bone-dry lettuce. Just take as much as you require, roll the towel up again, and put it back in the fridge. The greens will stay fresh, crisp, and dry for up to five days.

—Lillian Kayte, Gainesville, FL

## Cooling Stock Quickly

To quickly chill stock so that I can skim off the fat, I use my ice-cream maker. First I chill the container of the ice-cream maker in the freezer as I would for making ice cream. I pour some of the hot stock into the container, and after five minutes of occasional stirring, the fat has

congealed on the surface and is easy to remove. The freezer container is usually cold enough to handle another batch of stock, and a third pass may even work. Even if I can't quick-chill the whole batch of stock, at least I've lowered the temperature of a good portion of it so that the rest doesn't need as long a refrigeration before defatting it.

—David Auerbach, Durham, NC

## Streakless Egg Wash

To make an egg wash that is smooth, evenly textured, and brushes on easily, I add a pinch of salt to one whole egg beaten with one tablespoon of water. The salt breaks down the protein in the egg white so that the wash is fluid. This way I don't end up trying to brush out globs of viscous egg white on tender bread dough. The baked bread has an even color with no streaks.

—Robin Rice, Norwich, VT

## Washing Lots of Mushrooms

To wash volumes of mushrooms quickly, plunge the mushrooms into a bath of two quarts water, ½ cup vinegar, and ¼ cup salt. Briefly swirl the mushrooms around to dislodge the dirt, and then lift the

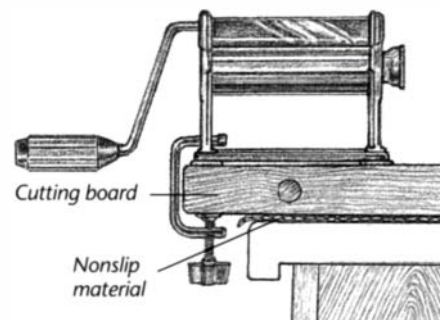


mushrooms out of the bath. The slightly acidic saline solution forces the dirt off quickly and the vinegar also helps keep the mushrooms from darkening.

—Arthur Gordon, chef/owner, Irregardless Café, Raleigh, NC

## Securing a Pasta Machine

To clamp down a pasta machine securely without risking damage to your counter-



top, clamp the machine to a cutting board. Put a piece of nonslip material—the kind you put between a rug and a slippery floor—between the cutting board and the countertop. Your pasta machine won't budge when you crank it. The nonslip material is available at carpet and hardware stores for about a dollar a square foot.

—J.J. Jackson, Victoria, BC

## Make Pesto Go Further

I learned from my Italian mother-in-law to add potato to basil pesto to cut down on any bitterness in the basil, to give the pesto more smoothness and body, and simply to yield more pesto. For every two cups of packed, whole basil leaves, I add two small, boiled, peeled, and cooled potatoes (boiling potatoes are best) to the processor or blender.

—Pat Melilli, Wappinger's Falls, NY

## Freezing Parsley

If you love using fresh parsley but seem to wind up with most of it going bad in the fridge, try this method for freezing it. Wash and dry the parsley, remove the leaves, and put them in a food processor. Chop them on high speed for about 20 seconds. Put the chopped parsley in the bottom of a plastic freezer bag, roll up the bag to remove all the air, and stick it in the freezer. It will keep for up to six months. You can use the parsley frozen, even in a dish that won't be cooked—the parsley will thaw in a matter of seconds.

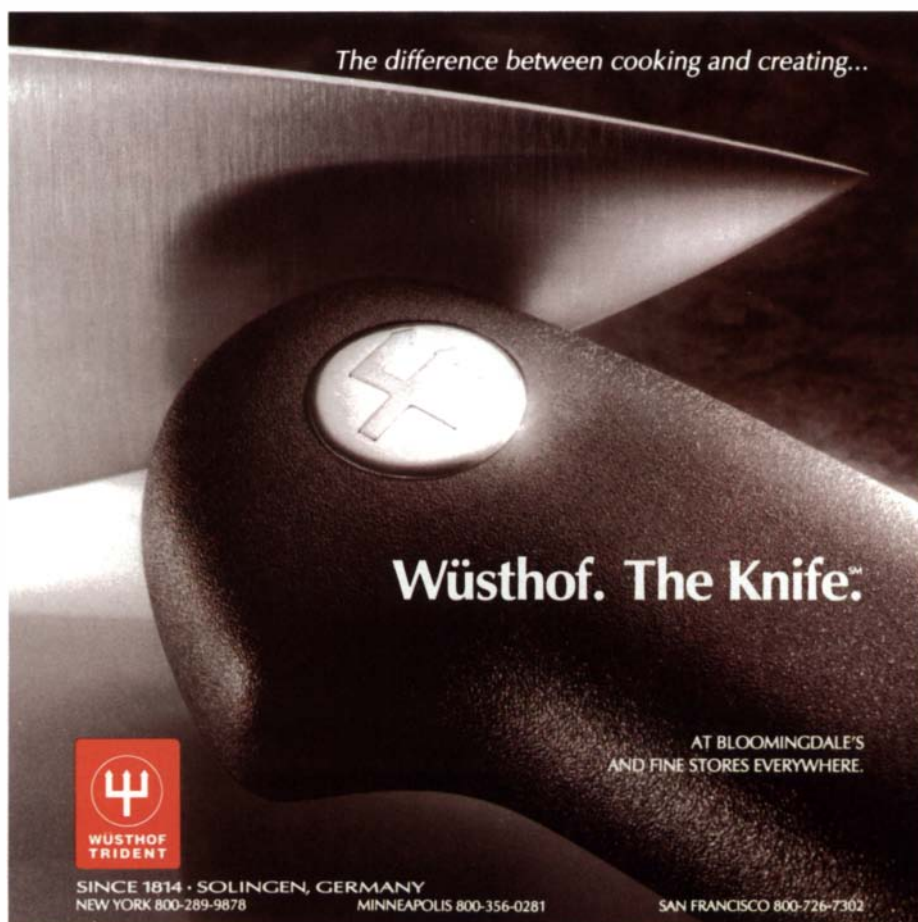
—Nina Rago, Tampa, FL

## Ball of Herbs

When adding loose herbs to a sauce, stew, or soup, instead of messing with cheesecloth and string, I put the herbs or




The difference between cooking and creating...



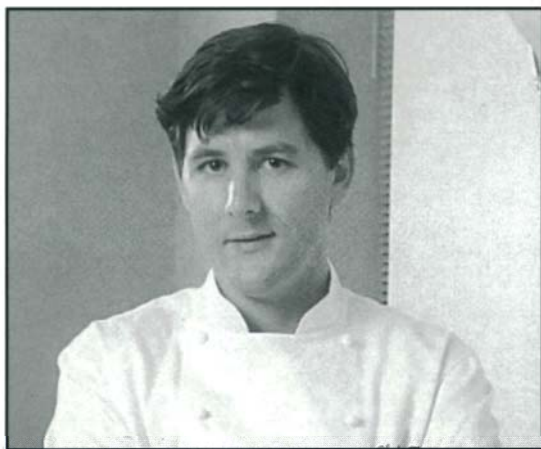
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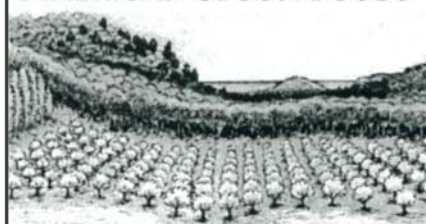


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spices in a mesh tea ball and hook the chain over the edge of the pot. The ball is easily retrieved, and I don't have to strain the sauce.

—Ruby Thomas, Anacortes, WA

## Loosening Molds

Unmolding a frozen dessert or other chilled food that clings like glue to its container can be a frustrating mess. Dipping the mold in hot water to melt the oil or butter and release the food doesn't always work, and after several tries you're mopping rivulets of water from the serving platter.

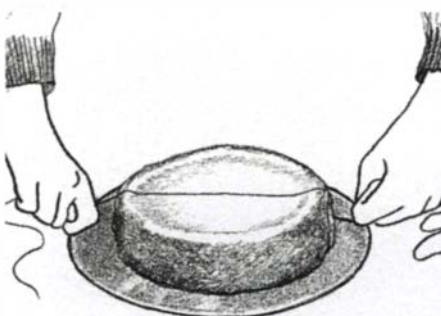
I like to use this dry method instead. Run the point of a knife around the edge of the cold mold, and then invert the mold and center it on a serving platter. With a hair dryer set on high, blow hot air at all the surfaces of the mold, making several passes about six to eight inches from the mold. A few seconds of this and you lift the mold from a perfectly released, perfectly centered, completely unblem-

ished dessert on a dry, clean platter.

—Martin Stone, author, *Desserts with a Difference*, New York, NY

## Cutting Cheesecake

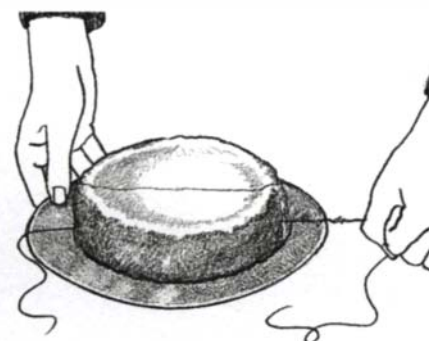
To cut attractive, smooth-edged slices of cheesecake, use fishing line instead of a knife. Cut a piece of fishing line (15-pound monofilament) longer than the diameter of the cheesecake. Wrap the ends of the



line around your middle fingers, stretch the line taught, and push it down through the center of the cake, slicing the cake in

half (left drawing). Let go of the line with one hand, and with the other hand, pull the line out of the side of the cake, as close to the plate as possible (drawing below). You can wipe off any cheesecake sticking to the line with a paper towel. Continue to make cuts through the center of the cake until you've divided the cake into as many slices as you need.

—John Paloian, J&J Cheesecake, Newtown, CT



**Editor's Note:** If you don't have fishing line handy, Eric Mockler of Norwalk, CT, suggests using dental floss instead. ♦

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# The Vibrant Art of Thai Cooking

Sparkling fresh flavors, textures, and colors make a Thai dinner shine

BY ARUN SAMPANTHAVIVAT



*Bright, pungent ingredients unite in Hot and Sour Soup, yet they retain their distinctive flavors, colors, and shapes. Lemon-grass, galangal (Thai ginger), kaffir lime leaves, cilantro, and pickled plum make the soup tart, lemony, and aromatic.*

Photo: Suzanne Roman



At its heart, Thai food is about the interplay of distinct flavors, colors, and textures. Each dish is composed from a palate of fresh herbs, crunchy vegetables, pungent spices, subtle flavorings, and tender meats and seafood. Like a gallery, the meal itself displays a beautiful variety of dishes. Artful presentation makes the first impression, then follows a balance of distinct and delicate flavors. The meal for six people that I present here demonstrates the principles of balance and variety so important in Thai cooking. It includes a light, crisp salad, a tart soup, nourishing stir-fry noodles, grilled meat, and sautéed vegetables.

### WHY THAI FOOD IS SO POPULAR

The rapid growth in popularity of Thai food in the United States doesn't surprise me. American diners are now looking beyond Chinese food and other familiar ethnic cuisines. America's growing taste for spiciness, shown by the popularity of Cajun and Mexican food, has helped prepare Americans for the bold flavors of Thai food. The growing emphasis on freshness makes Thai food all the more appealing because central to it are fresh herbs and vegetables. Finally, authentic Thai cookery is now possible in America because Thai ingredients are becoming more available (see Sources on p. 22). The recent influx of Southeast Asians into American cities has created markets for exotic herbs, vegetables, and condiments that you couldn't find before. As a foreign student studying in America ten years ago, I had to grow a potted kaffir lime tree in the window of my small apartment because the leaves, needed in many Thai dishes, were simply not available. Today the kaffir lime leaves I use in my restaurant are grown in Florida and California.

### DISTINCTIVE THAI FLAVORS

The vibrant character of Thai food comes from carefully balancing hot, sweet, sour, and bitter flavors both within a dish and within a meal. Thai cooks rarely use recipes; instead they taste and make adjustments as they go.

Thai cooking glories in the use of fresh herbs. Fresh herbs have delicate overtones of flavor that are lost when the herbs are dried. With fresh herbs, the flavors not only permeate the dish, but also remain in the tissue of the leaf itself—you get a burst of flavor when you bite into the herb. Cilantro, also known in the U.S. as fresh coriander or Chinese parsley, is cooked in some dishes and used raw in salads and as a garnish. Its flavor is prominent in the Spicy Shrimp Salad, accompanied by fresh mint (recipe p. 23). Fresh basil is also important in Thai cooking. While the Roasted Eggplant with Shrimp and Basil (recipe p. 24) tastes the most authentic

when made with Thai basil, which has an anise flavor, the more readily available sweet basil used in Italian cooking is a good substitute.

Lemongrass and kaffir lime leaves both have an aromatic, lemony flavor that perfumes many Thai dishes. Lemongrass is a long, slender, multilayered, pale-green stalk usually as thick as a finger (see photo on p. 22). Only the first couple of inches near the root end are juicy enough to use. If the outer layers look dry and brown, peel them off to reveal the green layers inside. Since lemongrass is fibrous and tough, you need to slice it extremely thin before adding it to dishes in which it will be eaten raw, like the Spicy Shrimp Salad. When you're going to steep it in liquids, like the broth for Hot and Sour Soup (recipe p. 24), you can cut it into thicker slices because it isn't meant to be eaten. Kaffir lime leaves impart a pungent, lemon-lime flavor. Often packaged in plastic bags by the branch, kaffir lime leaves are sold both fresh and frozen. These tough leaves are sliced fine to toss in the Spicy Shrimp Salad or just torn to simmer in the Hot and Sour Soup.

Two kinds of ginger are used in Thai cooking: common ginger (the ginger usually found in supermarkets), and a type that's harder to find, called galangal, Thai ginger, or laos (see photo on p. 22). Though cousins, galangal and ginger have different flavors and shouldn't be used interchangeably. Galangal has a more aromatic, almost medicinal flavor and has none of the bite of common ginger. I use thick slices of galangal in Hot and Sour Soup.

Most Thai dishes incorporate fresh chiles. Thai chiles are red, small, and very hot. If you can't find them, serrano peppers are more commonly available in American supermarkets and are a good substitute. If serranos aren't available, use the larger jalapeño chiles. Much of the hotness of chiles is in the seeds, so leave them in to produce hotter dishes, or remove the seeds to moderate the heat.

Coconut is the backdrop of many Thai dishes, especially curries. In this meal, I use coconut milk in the marinade for the Pork Satay and in the Peanut Dipping Sauce (recipes pp. 23–24), where it is mixed with Massaman curry paste, one of the many pastes

### MENU

*Spicy Shrimp Salad (Sang-Wa)\**



*Pork Satay with Peanut Dipping Sauce and Cucumber Salad (Moo Satay)\**



*Hot and Sour Soup (Tom Yum Kai)\**



*Roasted Eggplant with Shrimp and Basil (Makhua Song Kruang)\**



*Bangkok-Style Glass Noodles (Phad Wunsen)\**



*Jasmine Rice (Khao Horm Mali)*



*Sliced Mangos (Mamuang)*

*\* recipe follows*

used to flavor Thai dishes. Canned coconut milk is easy to find and fine to use for this dish because it's one ingredient among many, so absolute freshness of flavor is less important.

Fish sauce and soy sauce supply a salty flavor. Made from fermented fish, fish sauce, or *nam pla*, can take some getting used to. Use a high-quality Thai brand, such as Tippiaros, because lower-quality fish sauces tend to be overly salty. Along with the regular type of soy sauce commonly found in the U.S., Thai cooking also uses a dark soy sauce, called *see-ewe dum*, and a dark, sweet soy sauce, called *see-ewe wan*. (Dragonfly is a good brand for both types.) I like to use these darker soy sauces to enhance the color of a dish and to give it a slightly sweet overtone. You'll notice that the transparent noodles in the Bangkok-Style Glass Noodles (recipe p. 25) take on the color of the dark soy sauce.

In Thailand, street vendors sell pickled plums, pickled mangoes, and other pickled fruits special to the region from their pushcarts. Though Thais don't use pickling as a means for preserving food as extensively as the Japanese or Koreans, we do like the sweet and sour dimension pickled fruits and vegetables add to a dish. Pickled plum gives the Hot and Sour Soup a little more tang, while cloves of pickled garlic are delightful to bite into in the Bangkok-Style Glass Noodles.

Lime juice and tamarind juice also contribute a tart and sour flavor to many Thai dishes. Tamarind juice is

made from the sticky pulp inside the pods from a tamarind tree. Sometimes you'll find these light-brown, papery pods at Latin American or Asian markets, but more often you'll find dark-brown blocks of compressed tamarind pulp from the pods. To make tamarind juice from tamarind pods or blocks of tamarind pulp, dissolve the pulp in hot water and strain out the seeds to get a liquid the color and consistency of soy sauce.

Many ingredients used in Thai cooking are becoming increasingly available in large supermarkets and specialty food stores in the United States, particularly in large urban areas. Asian markets are, of course, a good source for many Thai ingredients. There are mail-order sources for dried and canned ingredients (see Sources above), but for the fresh

## SOURCES FOR THAI INGREDIENTS

### Anzen Importers

736 N.E. MLK Jr. Blvd., Portland, OR 97232  
503/233-5111

### K. Kalustyan's

123 Lexington Ave., New York, NY 10016  
212/685-3451

### Oriental Food Market & Cooking School

2801 W. Howard St., Chicago, IL 60645  
312/274-2826

### The Oriental Pantry

423 Great Rd. (2A), Acton, MA 01720  
800/828-0368

### Spice Merchant

PO Box 524, Jackson Hole, WY 83001  
800/551-5999



*The flavor of lemongrass is subtle, but the texture is tough. Thickly sliced lemongrass, above, is too tough to eat, but when steeped in the Hot and Sour Soup, it imparts a delicate lemon flavor. To make lemongrass easier to chew, cut the fibers short by slicing the stalk into thin rounds.*



*Galangal looks similar to common ginger, but the taste is pure Thai. Its aromatic, menthol flavor gives a distinctive character to Thai dishes.*

ingredients, you'll have to see what you can find locally. If you can't find an ingredient or a good substitute, prepare the dish without it and adjust the other flavorings to compensate. There are no rules in Thai cooking—taste and adjust the ingredients according to what's at hand and to suit your tastes.

## PUTTING TOGETHER A THAI MEAL

Fresh, bright flavors, balance, variety, and pleasing presentation are the keys to a satisfying Thai meal. The dishes I've chosen for a six-person dinner have a good mix of flavors—hot, spicy, sour, bitter, sweet; and a lot of contrasting textures—crisp, soft, and



### **Straight shrimp.**

For a nicer presentation, keep the shrimp from curling as it cooks by inserting a bamboo skewer through its length.



chewy. The Pork Satay, with its accompanying curry-flavored dipping sauce and cucumber salad, is the one dish that is predominantly meat. In the Spicy Shrimp Salad, the big, bright flavors of chile peppers, fresh mint, and cilantro balance the mild shrimp, which are doused with a sour marinade. The tart, aromatic broth in the Hot and Sour Soup makes your mouth tingle, while the Bangkok-Style Glass Noodles have a milder, more soothing flavor. Finally, the Roasted Eggplant with Shrimp and Basil has a tender, saucy, smoky quality not found in the other dishes.

Serve all the dishes at the same time, presented family-style in platters and bowls. Have the diners serve themselves small tastes from each dish throughout the meal, rather than larger portions at the beginning. Serve plenty of rice with the meal—my favorite is fragrant Jasmine rice, which you can also find in Asian groceries. Forks and spoons are the preferred eating utensils in Thailand.

Though not really served as a separate course, desserts are also eaten at the end of a meal in Thailand. I like to serve fresh fruit, such as mango, nicely sliced and arranged. Thai custards and dessert soups, lightly sweet and delicate in flavor, are also wonderful.

### **SPICY SHRIMP SALAD**

The sweet shrimp balances brightly flavored herbs and vegetables and hot chile peppers. The dish comes together quickly once the vegetables are chopped. *Serves six.*

**3 Tbs. lime juice**

**2 Tbs. fish sauce**

**Salt**

**Sugar**

**12 raw jumbo or colossal shrimp, in their shells, heads off**

**2 Tbs. thinly sliced lemongrass**

**2 Tbs. peeled and finely julienned ginger (common)**

**3 to 4 chile peppers (Thai, serrano, or jalapeño), seeded and cut in fine julienne**

**2 scallions (white parts and some green), in julienne**

**½ cup loosely packed cilantro leaves**

**¼ cup finely julienned red bell pepper**

**¼ cup coarsely chopped fresh mint leaves**

**4 shallots or 1 medium onion, sliced thin**

**4 kaffir lime leaves, in extremely fine julienne**

**Paprika (optional)**

**1 Tbs. chopped chives**

**12 bamboo skewers**



**Strong-flavored herbs and vegetables strike a balance with mild shrimp.** Cilantro, mint, and kaffir lime leaves mix with slivers of lemongrass, ginger, scallions, and chile pepper to form a Spicy Shrimp Salad (recipe at left).

Heat a small pot of water in which to poach the shrimp.

In a large bowl, combine the lime juice and fish sauce and add a pinch of salt and sugar. Set this dressing aside.

To keep the shrimp from curling during cooking, pierce each one lengthwise from tail to head with a bamboo skewer (see photo above left). Poach the shrimp in barely simmering water until the shrimp is just cooked through and opaque, about 3 min. Remove the skewers and peel the shells off the shrimp, leaving the last segment of the shell near the tail and the tail itself intact. Slice the back of each shrimp and remove the dark intestinal tract by scraping it out with the tip of a knife. Place the shrimp in the dressing and toss to coat.

Add to the shrimp the lemongrass, ginger, chile peppers, scallions, cilantro, red pepper, mint, shallots, kaffir lime leaves, and, if you like, a dash of paprika. Toss well to combine the ingredients and garnish with the chives.

### **PORK SATAY WITH PEANUT DIPPING SAUCE AND CUCUMBER SALAD**

Except for the final grilling of the marinated meat, this dish can be prepared in advance. Serve the skewers of meat on a plate with the peanut dipping sauce and cucumber salad in separate bowls on the side. *Serves six.*

#### **PORK SATAY:**

**1 pork tenderloin, about 1½ lb.**

**½ tsp. ground coriander**

**½ tsp. ground cumin**

**1 Tbs. melted butter**

**1 Tbs. unsweetened coconut milk (canned is fine)**

**1 Tbs. vegetable oil**

**1 tsp. paprika**

**1 tsp. ground turmeric**

**½ tsp. curry powder**

**1½ Tbs. fish sauce**

**1 tsp. sugar**

**12 bamboo skewers, 6 in. long**

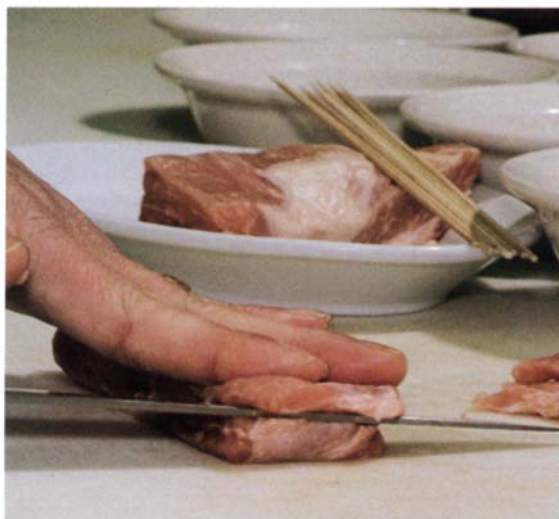
Cut the tenderloin in half so that you have two pieces about 5 in long. Trim off the fat and square the edges. Slice



### ***Tender pork satay to dip in peanut sauce.***

*Lean pork tenderloin is sliced and marinated in curry spices and then grilled until golden brown (recipe begins on p. 23). Cool, sweet-and-sour cucumber salad is a nice foil.*

*To slice pork tenderloin evenly, apply light pressure on top of the meat, and be sure to keep the knife horizontal to the cutting board. Chilling the meat first will make it even easier to slice.*



the meat lengthwise into ¼-in.-thick strips (see photo above). The pork will be easier to slice if you first chill it in the freezer for about an hour.

Prepare the marinade by thoroughly blending all the ingredients except the pork in a large bowl. Add the pork, toss until well coated, and marinate in the refrigerator for 30 to 60 min. Meanwhile, soak the skewers in cold water so they don't burn when you grill the meat.

Insert a skewer lengthwise through the middle of each piece of meat. Cook the skewered pork either on a grill, under the broiler, or in a frying pan over high heat until the outside is lightly charred but the inside is still tender and moist.

### **PEANUT DIPPING SAUCE:**

Massaman curry paste gives the peanut dipping sauce a wonderful curry flavor. My favorite brand is Mae Sui, though other good brands are available at Asian markets. If Massa-

man curry paste isn't available, you can use a red curry paste instead, but don't substitute a curry powder. I like to use smooth Jif peanut butter in this sauce. *Makes 1¾ cups.*

*1 Tbs. Massaman curry paste  
½ cup smooth peanut butter  
1½ cups unsweetened coconut milk  
1 Tbs. sugar*

In a small saucepan, mix together all the ingredients. Simmer over low heat for 20 to 30 min. until the flavors are well blended. Serve warm or at room temperature. This sauce will keep for several weeks in the refrigerator.

### **CUCUMBER SALAD:**

*¼ cup sugar  
1 tsp. salt  
½ cup rice vinegar  
4 pickling cucumbers (or 2 regular cucumbers), quartered lengthwise, seeded, and sliced thin  
1 shallot, sliced thin  
A few whole cilantro leaves  
A few strips of finely julienned red bell pepper (½ in. long)*

In a small saucepan, simmer the sugar and salt in the rice vinegar until dissolved, about 5 min. Let the mixture cool to room temperature and stir in the cucumbers and shallot. Sprinkle cilantro leaves and red pepper on top to decorate.

### **HOT AND SOUR SOUP**

This soup is full of contrasting flavors and colors (see photo on p. 20). Look for pickled plum, lemongrass, galangal, kaffir lime leaves, and tamarind in Asian markets. If you can't get some of the ingredients, make the soup without them. *Serves six.*

*3 skinless, boneless chicken breast halves  
6 cups chicken stock (homemade or canned low-salt)  
2 to 3 chile peppers (Thai, serrano, or jalapeño)  
2 shallots  
1 in. galangal, peeled and cut into ½-in. slices  
1 stalk lemongrass, sliced thick  
2 tsp. tamarind pulp dissolved in 1 Tbs. hot water  
¾ cup canned straw mushrooms, halved; or sliced fresh mushrooms  
2 pieces pickled plum  
3 to 4 kaffir lime leaves, torn halfway through  
2 cherry tomatoes, quartered  
1 cup loosely packed cilantro leaves  
2 tsp. minced scallion (white only)  
2 Tbs. freshly squeezed lime juice  
2 to 4 Tbs. fish sauce*

To help the chicken pieces hold their shape in the soup, first sear the whole breasts on both sides in a nonstick frying pan over medium-high heat. Cut the chicken into 1-in. cubes.

Bring the chicken stock to a boil in a saucepan over medium heat. Crush the chiles and shallots just enough to release their oils by pressing them against a cutting board with the flat part of a chef's knife. Add them to the stock, along with the galangal, lemongrass, tamarind juice, mushrooms, pickled plum, kaffir lime leaves, cherry tomatoes, and chicken. Bring the stock to a boil and let it simmer until all the ingredients are heated thoroughly and the chicken is cooked (about 4 min.).

Right before serving, if you like, remove the tough lemongrass, galangal, kaffir lime leaves, and chile peppers. Add the cilantro, scallion, and lime juice. Season to taste with the fish sauce.

### **ROASTED EGGPLANT WITH SHRIMP AND BASIL**

The smoky, roasted flavor of the eggplant is a nice foil to the basil in this dish. Long, slender Thai or Japanese egg-



plant work best because they cook quickly, have fewer seeds, and taste less bitter than the more common plump eggplant. *Serves six.*

**6 Thai or Japanese eggplant, 6 to 8 in. long**  
 **$\frac{1}{3}$  cup vegetable oil**  
**1 Tbs. minced garlic**  
**4 shallots, sliced thin**  
 **$\frac{1}{2}$  cup chopped cilantro**  
**9 small raw shrimp, peeled, deveined, and halved**  
 **$\frac{1}{2}$  cup water**  
**1 tsp. brown fermented bean sauce or miso**  
**2 Tbs. soy sauce or fish sauce**  
**3 to 4 chile peppers (Thai, serrano, or jalapeño), seeded and cut in fine julienne**  
**1 small red bell pepper, julienned**  
**1 Tbs. sugar**  
**2 cups loosely packed basil leaves (Thai or sweet)**

Char the skins of each whole eggplant under a broiler, on a grill, or in a frying pan, turning the eggplant as each side blackens. When cool enough to handle, pull the skin off. Slice each eggplant lengthwise halfway through. Spread open the sides of each eggplant to form a container and arrange them on a serving plate.

Heat the oil in a wok or large, heavy frying pan over medium heat. Add the garlic and stir until it just begins to color. Stir in the shallots and 1 Tbs. cilantro. Add the shrimp and water and stir well. Stir in the fermented bean sauce, soy sauce, chile peppers, red pepper, sugar, and basil. Lower the heat and simmer briefly, until the the shrimp is cooked, about 2 min. Pour the shrimp and sauce over the eggplant. Garnish with the rest of the cilantro.

### BANGKOK-STYLE GLASS NOODLES

The dried glass noodles called for in this recipe are thin, brittle, milky-white noodles made from mung bean starch. They're usually sold in small bundles. The lily buds, cloud ear mushrooms, and pickled garlic add an authentic note to this popular Bangkok dish, but by all means make this stir-fry even if you can't find these ingredients. *Serves six.*

**6 oz. dried glass noodles (also called cellophane noodles, mung bean thread noodles, or Chinese vermicelli)**  
 **$\frac{1}{2}$  cup dried lily buds (also called golden needles)**  
 **$\frac{1}{2}$  Tbs. dried cloud ear mushrooms**  
 **$\frac{1}{2}$  cup vegetable oil**  
**1 Tbs. minced garlic**  
**1 cup thinly sliced raw chicken breast (about  $\frac{1}{3}$  lb.)**  
**Salt**  
**3 eggs**  
 **$\frac{1}{2}$  cup julienned celery, cut 2-in. long**  
**1 cup finely shredded green cabbage**  
 **$\frac{1}{2}$  cup finely julienned carrots, cut 2-in. long**  
**1 Tbs. dark soy sauce (see-ewe dum), or sweet soy sauce (see-ewe wan)**  
**3 heads sweet pickled garlic or 3 heads roasted garlic, sliced thick horizontally**  
 **$\frac{1}{4}$  cup soy sauce**  
**1 tsp. white pepper**  
**2 tsp. sugar**  
**2 cups chicken stock (homemade or canned low-salt)**  
 **$\frac{1}{4}$  cup thinly sliced scallion (white and green parts), sliced on an angle**  
**Cilantro sprigs for garnish**  
**A few strips of julienned red bell pepper for garnish**

Soak the dried glass noodles and lily buds separately in warm water, and the cloud ear mushrooms in hot water, for 30 min. Drain well.

Heat the oil over high heat in a wok or large, heavy frying pan. Add the garlic and stir until it begins to color, then stir in the chicken and a dash of salt. After a minute, push

the chicken to the sides of the wok and crack the eggs into the center of the pan. Scramble the eggs briefly, and then spoon the runny eggs onto the sides of the pan so that they cook thinly and quickly. Once the eggs have set, scrape them down and add the soaked noodles (cut them in half if they're very long), lily buds, cloud ears, celery, cabbage, carrots, dark soy sauce, pickled garlic, soy sauce, white pepper, and sugar, stirring well after each addition.

Stir in the chicken stock and mix well. The stock should be absorbed fairly quickly, within 2 to 3 min. Continue cooking and stirring until the noodles are clear and glossy.

Remove from heat and stir in the sliced scallion. Place on a serving plate and garnish with cilantro sprigs and red pepper.

*Arun Sampanthavivat, originally from the southern peninsula of Thailand, paints and writes poetry when he's not busy running his Chicago restaurant, "Arun's." ♦*



**Carrots and squash become roses in hands skilled in the Thai art of vegetable carving. Because "food meets the eye before it meets the mouth," Roasted Eggplant with Shrimp and Basil is even more appealing when presented with these decorations.**

**Bangkok's favorite noodles.** After a half-hour soak in water, dried glass noodles, lily buds, and cloud ear mushrooms are quickly stir-fried with chicken, eggs, slivered vegetables and pickled garlic to make Bangkok-Style Glass Noodles (recipe at left).





# Creating Perfect Pizza Crust

Thin or thick, crisp or chewy—it's all in how you treat the dough

BY GAY CHANLER

## **BASIC PIZZA DOUGH**

*Yields about 3 pounds of dough.*

1 tablespoon dry yeast  
½ teaspoon sugar  
2⅔ cups warm water  
2 tablespoons olive oil  
7½ cups unbleached all-purpose flour  
¼ cup whole-wheat or rye flour  
1 tablespoon coarse salt or 2 teaspoons fine salt

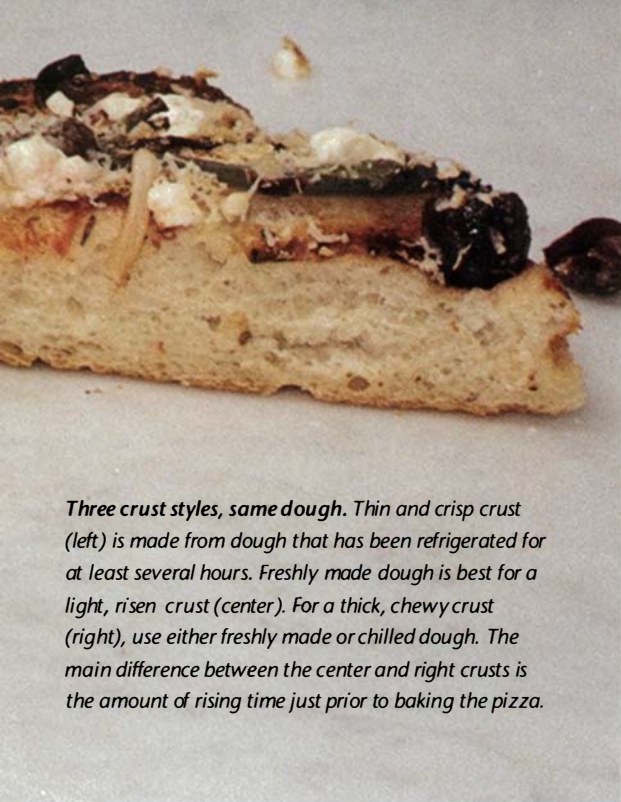
Everyone knows that the perfect crust is the basis for the perfect pizza. I began my search for the perfect pizza crust ten years ago as a sideline to my daily bread-baking. While I had achieved a certain degree of expertise with bread, my pizzas in those days were unpredictable at best. After some research and a lot of experimentation with doughs, pans, ovens, toppings, and techniques, first in my home and later in professional kitchens, I learned what conditions and methods will conspire to create a perfect crust each time.

Ultimately, a good pizza results from the balanced union of a well-cooked crust and appropriately selected toppings. The crust can be thin and crisp, risen and light, or thick and chewy, depending on how the dough is handled (for a lineup of the three types, see the photo above). The toppings can range from a simple combination of coarse salt, fresh herbs, and olive oil, to a spicily sauced, sausage-studded, cheese-and-vegetable melange. Whatever style I choose to make, I want to be sure that the crust has good flavor and is fully cooked to a light crispiness—not doughy in the middle or wet and pasty under the topping.

## **MAKING THE DOUGH**

I start with a basic dough recipe and then control the variables of rising, resting, and baking to get the crust I want. The recipe at left makes enough dough





**Three crust styles, same dough.** Thin and crisp crust (left) is made from dough that has been refrigerated for at least several hours. Freshly made dough is best for a light, risen crust (center). For a thick, chewy crust (right), use either freshly made or chilled dough. The main difference between the center and right crusts is the amount of rising time just prior to baking the pizza.

for three or four small pizzas or two large pizzas.

I've achieved the best results when using an all-purpose unbleached flour. Most such flours have a protein content of 11 to 12 percent, which is indicated on the bag's nutritional information panel. This is also the gluten-factor indicator, which determines the elastic qualities of the dough. Higher-gluten flours are better for breads and pasta, lower-gluten flours for cakes and pastry. Cheaper flours usually contain less protein and therefore are less suitable for breads.

The addition of whole-wheat or rye flour is optional, but I usually add one or the other for more flavor and nutrition. You can use as much as 1 cup of whole-wheat flour, but adding more than  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup of rye flour per recipe will yield a dense, heavy dough, due to the lack of gluten in rye. I have made pizza dough using just bread flour with good results, though the higher gluten content of bread flours can make the dough stubbornly elastic when trying to make a thin crust. Using all bread flour is fine if I'm going to store the dough overnight in the refrigerator (chilling overnight gives the gluten a chance to relax). Bumping up the yeast by an extra 2 teaspoons gives an all-bread-flour pizza dough better rising action.

Whatever flours I choose, I mix the dough carefully to avoid adding too much flour. Because the moisture content of flours may vary, slightly more or less flour than called for in the recipe may be needed to achieve the correct light and springy consistency. Too much flour, either added initially or kneaded in later, can make a heavy dough, and the crust will be dense or tough. Too little flour will make a sticky dough that's liable to tear during

shaping. The ideal dough is soft, springy, and pliant, but not rubbery.

I usually make my dough plain, preferring to add the spices and cheese in the topping. Occasionally I add to the dough sautéed chopped onions or herbs, such as oregano, thyme, rosemary, marjoram, or crushed red or black pepper. I know some cooks add grated cheese to the crust, but I'm wary of the cheese burning in the high temperatures at which I bake my pizzas.

First I proof the yeast for 5 to 10 minutes in 1 cup of warm water and a pinch of sugar, until the yeast dissolves and the liquid begins to appear creamy. This tells me that the yeast is active. Red Star is the brand of yeast I prefer, simply because I've used it for years and I'm familiar with the way it acts. I don't use fast-rising yeast for pizza dough. It works so quickly that it can get away from me, and it isn't suitable for dough that I'm going to store in the refrigerator. (Chilling doesn't stop the action of the yeast, but merely slows it down.)

Next I add the remaining water and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to 2 cups flour, including the whole-wheat or rye flour. I beat this well (a hundred strokes) until it's smooth and soupy, and then let it stand for 10 to 15 minutes, until it's bubbly and swollen. I then add the salt and olive oil and proceed to stir in the rest of the flour by the cupful until I get a stiff but still slightly sticky dough. I always stir the dough in the same direction so that the gluten strands retain a smooth, consistent pattern (this isn't readily discernible).

When the dough begins to form a cohesive mass that's thick enough to hold its shape, I turn it out onto a lightly floured surface and let it rest while I clean and oil the bowl. I knead the dough, turning it clockwise by quarter turns and sprinkling a little flour on top and on the surface underneath before folding it over. I add just enough flour so the dough doesn't stick and tear. (A dough scraper is invaluable for lifting the mass of dough cleanly from the counter.) Kneading takes about 5 to 8 minutes. When the dough is smooth, springy, and pliant—earlobe-soft—I return it to the oiled bowl, cover it with a damp cloth, and let it rise until doubled. This generally takes between 35 and 45 minutes at 70° to 75°F.

## CRUST OPTIONS

I have three options for handling the dough after the first rise. I can form the crust, assemble the pizza and bake it immediately. I can punch the dough down and let it rise again before baking. This



**Shaping a pizza crust by hand.** To start shaping a pizza, Gay Chanler takes a ball of dough and holds it vertically, turning it like a wheel and letting gravity stretch the dough. The dough shown here is just about ready to go on an oiled baking sheet, where Chanler will continue to work it into the desired shape.



*For a thin crust, use cold dough and work fast. The author rolls or presses the dough to about a quarter inch thick, dresses it lightly with oil and seasonings, and gets it into the oven before it starts to rise. Halfway through baking, she adds asparagus, prosciutto, and fontina cheese (see the recipe at right).*

doesn't substantially change the resulting crust, but it gives me more time if I need it before baking the pizza. Or, I can refrigerate the dough for several hours or up to two days. In this case, I give it a final punch down after it has chilled for about 40 minutes and put it in a plastic bag.

By letting the dough mature in the refrigerator, the gluten ripens and relaxes. The dough becomes less sticky, and it will stretch farther when I work with it. With this refrigerated dough, I can obtain a thin, crisp crust, or a thick, chewy crust, depending on how thin I roll or stretch the dough when forming it, and on whether or not I allow it to warm up and rise before baking it. A thick crust made from chilled dough is likely to have larger air bubbles and be less delicate and more chewy—rather like the difference between regular and sourdough breads. I believe crust made from refrigerated dough has a better flavor, too.

**For a light, risen crust,** I like to use a freshly made dough, although you can use a chilled dough. For the highest, puffiest results, I add 2 teaspoons more yeast to the recipe and use the dough within three hours of making it. For a finer-textured crust, I simply roll it out thinner and let it rise to the same height. I let the dough rise until it's puffy, and my fingertips disappear when I press on it (as shown in the photo above right). This takes about 10 minutes with freshly made, room-temperature dough, or about 15 minutes with chilled dough.

**A thick, chewy crust** can be made either with fresh or chilled dough. I stretch or press the dough to about 1/3 to 1/2 inch thick and let it rise just slightly. Whether I end up with a thick and chewy crust or a light and risen one depends on how thick I roll it out and how high I let it rise.

**For a thin, crisp crust,** I use dough straight out of the refrigerator. I roll it out as thin as I want it—



*For a light, risen crust, fresh dough is best. Pressed or patted out to the desired shape, freshly made dough is allowed to rise until puffy and soft. When cooked, the interior will be light and slightly chewy, with fairly large air holes.*

usually about 1/4 inch—and get it into the oven within minutes, before it has a chance to rise.

## ASSEMBLING THE PIZZA

I assemble the pizza on an oiled, rimless cookie sheet. A third of the dough recipe will make a 12- to 16-inch round crust, depending on how thin I roll or spread it. The smaller the circumference of the pizza, the easier it is to work with.

As much as I'd love to, I've never mastered the flashy toss-and-spin technique of professional pizza makers. Instead, I lightly form the dough into a ball, and then stretch it out. First, I hold it vertically by one edge and turn it in my hands, allowing gravity to stretch it as I turn it (see the photo on p. 27). Then I lay it on the cookie sheet and press out the dough, starting from the center. I'm careful not to tear or poke holes in the dough. A floured rolling pin is handy for rolling out thin crusts. If the dough springs back, I let it rest a minute or two, or chill it in the fridge, and then continue to work it out. If I'm using a sauce, I spread it on sparingly so that the dough shows through. Otherwise the crust will be soggy on top. If I'm not using a sauce, I'll drizzle some olive oil over the dough and season it with salt, pepper, herbs, and perhaps garlic.

Next, I arrange the toppings, usually three to four items, so that they don't overlap. I apply the cheese a little more than halfway through the baking process. By adding the cheese when the crust is just lightly browned, I can tell when the topping is sufficiently cooked and also avoid overbrowned, leathery cheese and an undercooked crust. Those toppings that don't need much cooking, like blanched spinach or asparagus, paper-thin prosciutto, or steamed shellfish, also go on at halftime, along with the cheese.

I bake pizza in a very hot oven—475°F. I've baked pizzas on heavy baking sheets and on a baking stone. If it's sufficiently preheated, the stone



yields a superior, dry, uniformly crisp crust. Without a stone, I can still get an excellent crust with an oiled sheet. I sometimes use both if my pizza is large and heavy, partially cooking the pizza on the baking sheet first, and then transferring it to the stone halfway through, when I add the cheese (a thin, raw dough can buckle when sliding onto a stone). This way, I can maintain an even, thin crust while getting the benefits of the baking stone.

I check the pizza during baking and rotate it if it appears to be cooking unevenly. Also, I lift the crust to see how it's cooking underneath (see the photo below). If the bottom is still pale while the top seems almost done, I'll turn the oven temperature down and leave the pizza in longer.

When the crust is lightly browned and the toppings are cooked, I sprinkle on the cheeses. Then I bake the pizza an additional 8 to 10 minutes, or until



the cheese is melted and bubbly. By this time, the crust will be perfectly done.

If I'm using a pizza stone, I slide the pizza onto a cookie sheet, or remove it with spatulas to a cutting board. I cut it into wedges with a long, sharp chef's knife or a pizza cutter. To keep it hot, I may serve only part of it at once, leaving the remainder on the stone in the turned-off oven. I rarely have any leftover pizza, but if I do, I thoroughly enjoy the remainder for lunch or a snack the following day, either at room temperature or reheated in a 300° oven just until warm. The crust will no longer be crisp unless it's reheated, but it remains as tasty as ever.

Gay Chanler studied at the New York Restaurant School and the Cordon Bleu in Paris. For six years, she was chef at Yaddo, an artist's retreat in Saratoga Springs, New York. Chanler currently works as a baker and pastry chef at Sweet Surrender, a commercial custom bakery in Washington, DC. ♦

*Don't forget about the bottom of the crust. The perfect crust is thoroughly baked and nicely browned not only on the top, but also on the bottom. The author checks the underside of the crust halfway through baking and at the end.*

## Pizza toppings

I usually use raw vegetables on my pizza, but leftover cooked vegetables work well, too. Sliced thin and spread sparingly, raw onions, bell peppers, scallions, garlic, sliced fresh tomatoes, eggplant, or mushrooms will cook nicely. Drizzling a little olive oil over raw vegetables enhances their texture and taste. Leftover ratatouille, cooked asparagus, broccoli, zucchini, and mushrooms also work well as long as they're not overcooked initially and are fairly dry when they go on the pizza. I always leave space between the items I put on a pizza. This prevents their juices from seeping into the crust and making it soggy on top.

I use only cooked meats, such as ham, chicken, sausage, or beef, either leftovers or precooked. Shrimp, scallops, and mussels can be used raw as long as they aren't buried in the topping sauce, or they can be precooked. Below are some specific topping recipes from my kitchen.—G.C.

### SHRIMP, MUSSELS, AND HOT PEPPER

This combination is especially good on a risen crust. Peel and devein 6 shrimp, and cut them in half lengthwise. Season them with lemon juice, salt, and pepper. Clean 8 mussels and steam them briefly, just long enough so they open, about 1 min. Shell them. Spread ½ cup seasoned tomato sauce thin over the crust and sprinkle with 2 or 3 slivered cloves of garlic and ½ tsp. oregano. Bake at 475°F, 12 to 15 min., until the crust begins to color. Remove the pizza from the oven. Arrange the shrimp and mussels evenly over the crust and sprinkle with ½ chopped jalapeño pepper, ½ cup shredded Monterey Jack or mozzarella and 2 Tbs. grated Parmesan. Bake for 8 to 10 min. more, until the cheeses are melted and bubbly. Garnish with cilantro.

### SPINACH, MUSHROOMS, AND BLUE CHEESE

Try this on a thick and chewy crust. Brush the prepared dough lightly with olive oil and sprinkle with 6 slivered cloves of garlic, salt, and pepper. Bake at 475° for 10 min. Meanwhile, put 10 oz. spinach, washed and stemmed, in a colander in the sink and pour about a quart of boiling water over it. Let drain. Press gently to remove any excess moisture, but don't squeeze the spinach. Remove the crust from the oven, arrange the spinach, thin slices of red onion and mushrooms, and 2 Tbs. pine nuts or walnut pieces on it. Bake 8 min. Sprinkle on 1 cup grated mozzarella and ½ cup crumbled blue cheese and bake another 5 min., until the cheeses are melted.

### ASPARAGUS, PROSCIUTTO, AND FONTINA

This is great on a thin, crisp crust. Brush the prepared dough lightly with olive oil. Sprinkle with 4 sliced scallions, ½ tsp. dill, salt, and pepper. Bake at 475° for 10 min., until the crust is firm and just beginning to color. Remove from the oven, arrange 8 to 10 spears of blanched, cooled, and drained asparagus, pieces of cut or torn prosciutto (about 2 oz.), and slices of fontina cheese (about 5 oz.). Sprinkle with Parmesan. Bake 8 to 10 min. more, or until the cheeses are melted and bubbly and the crust is golden.

# A Fresh Look at Sautés

A French chef puts his contemporary spin on classic methods

BY JEAN-CHARLES BERRUET

Sautés can be very simple. You brown the main ingredient in fat, garnish with vegetables, and make the sauce in the same pan, using all that tasty residue in the bottom. Sautés play a major role in classic French cuisine, and some dishes have become elaborate affairs over the years. Take chicken Marengo, for example. It starts out with sautéed chicken, to which you add tomatoes, mushrooms, crayfish, and fried heart-shaped croutons; then you top the whole thing off with deep-fried eggs.

*For a garnish, choose ingredients that accent the rest of the sauté. The author cuts sour pickles into fine julienne to use in his cod sauté; French cornichons have the best flavor and texture. The pickles and some capers are a good sharp foil for both the mild cod and the rich butter in the sauce.*



But I prefer to cook simpler and lighter dishes, which I call *sautés à la minute*—instant sautés. I often use olive oil as the cooking fat for these sautés and take care to get the freshest ingredients; then I cook them so quickly that they keep their individual flavors.

My contemporary style of sauté is very fast and easy to make. Once my ingredients are prepared, the dish doesn't take more than a few minutes to cook and assemble. While the possible combinations of ingredients and seasonings are infinite, the basic method for a quick sauté is the same. I'm from Brittany in France, so I'm a fish-lover by birth. In my adopted home of Nantucket, Massachusetts, excellent fish are plentiful, so I often feature fish sautés on the menu of my restaurant.

Whatever ingredient you choose—chicken, pork, rabbit, fish—make sure you pick a cut that's suitable for quick cooking. For example, if veal is your choice, don't use *osso buco* (veal shanks), which are tough unless they're long-simmered. Choose something like veal scallop, which is tender with just minimal cooking.

Cut the main ingredient into even pieces so they'll all cook at the same rate. And think about how the shape of your ingredient will translate into a finished dish. My sautés are not like stews, in which all the ingredients are jumbled together in a sauce. With a sauté, I can arrange the food on my plate to make it look really appetizing.

## THE FIRST STEP IS TO SEASON WELL

To prepare the sauté, I first season my main ingredient, which is fish in the two recipes I'm discussing in this article. The seasoning could be just salt and pepper, or it could be a marinade. I always use sea salt from Brittany, partly from loyalty to my home and partly because of its wonderful flavor. The salt is a grayish, coarse grain that's completely unrefined. It has a faint flavor of violets; I can really taste the difference between this salt and regular salt.



In the monkfish recipe (see photo on p. 34), I marinate the fish for extra flavor. Monkfish absorbs flavors easily, so I use the best quality extra-virgin olive oil, freshly grated ginger, and fresh lemon juice. I don't marinate for more than an hour, however, because I don't want the acidic lemon juice to "cook" the fish.

I like to season with fresh herbs, too. Parsley, rosemary, and thyme are good choices for seasoning the fish before cooking because these herbs can stand up to the heat of the sauté pan. The more tender, fragile herbs, like tarragon, chervil, chives, and basil, are good additions to the finished sauce.

## CORRECT SAUTÉING MAKES THIS DISH WORK

The next and perhaps most important step in a sauté is browning the main ingredients in a little fat—sautéing. The best pan to use is a sauté pan, called a *sauteuse* or *sautoir* in French. The pan should be wide enough to accommodate all the ingredients in one layer. Some sauté pans have straight sides, some have sloping; either style will do. The sides must be high enough to contain the amount of liquid I use to make the sauce, but low enough for the liquid to evaporate quickly and for me to get my spatula in the pan easily.

In my restaurant's kitchen, I have nothing but very heavy gauge copper pans with nickel lining. A few years ago, when the dollar was strong against



*Go easy on the lemon juice or the marinade will be too acidic and the fish will "cook" in it. The fish shouldn't stay in the marinade more than an hour, either. Berruet inserts a fork in the lemon half to make squeezing easy and to help sieve out any seeds.*

the French franc, I bought a whole containerful of wonderful copper from Dehillerin, the famous Parisian cookware store. Copper pans are great for browning because they conduct heat so quickly and evenly, and the nickel lining is good for dishes that contain wine or vinegar, because the acid doesn't attack the metal the way it would with aluminum. Aluminum also can give light-colored sauces a gray tinge. Whatever pan you use, be sure it's very heavy with a flat bottom for even heat distribution. Nonstick pans aren't great because you need the juices from the ingredients to leave a residue stuck in the pan so you can make a sauce. This doesn't always happen with non-stick pans.



*Lively heat is critical for a good sauté. A hot pan and hot fat will keep the fish from sticking by forming a crust on the fish the instant it hits the pan. It's important to brown the fish well for good flavor in the fish and in the sauce.*

I like to use olive oil or a mixture of olive oil and butter to brown the ingredients for my sautés. Butter on its own will burn, but blending butter and oil gives me a little butter flavor plus the ability to use really high heat, which is critical to a good sauté. If the pan and fat are not hot enough, the fish will stick to the pan. With really hot fat, a crust is formed the instant you put the fish in the pan, and this crust keeps it from sticking. You also want high heat for good caramelization, both on the fish itself and also in the little bits and pieces that stay in the pan. These caramelized bits will add flavor to the sauce. (See photo on p. 31.)

Brown the fish on both sides, turning delicate ones, like cod, carefully with a spatula so they don't fall apart. At this stage, cook the fish until it's almost, but not quite, done. It should still be a little underdone because it will keep cooking in its own heat while you make the sauce, and because you're going to reheat the fish in the sauce later.

#### **A QUICK SAUCE MADE IN THE SAUTÉ PAN**

When the fish is browned, take it out of the pan and keep it warm on a plate covered with foil. I use the warming shelf above my range at home.

Now you're ready to make the sauce. First degrease, another very important step because you don't want any extra fat in the dish, and definitely no

grease floating on the sauce. Pour off the excess butter or oil, but don't actually wipe out the pan because you risk wiping away the flavorful residue in the bottom.

The next step is called deglazing, which means adding liquid to the sauté pan and boiling to dissolve all the good cooked-on bits and to reduce and concentrate the liquid. Sometimes I'll cook the garnish ingredients, like the onions in the cod recipe (see photo on p. 34), in the pan before I add liquid and deglaze; sometimes I add liquid straight away.

The most common liquids to use in sautés are wine, stock, and spirits like cognac, calvados, or—in the monkfish recipe—rum. I also like to use cider, which is a traditional drink in Brittany. French cider is very dry, has about 8 percent alcohol and is slightly sparkling. It's not at all like American apple cider.

If I'm using spirits, I usually flame them first. This burns off the alcohol quickly and it also toasts the sugars in the spirit, giving a more mellow flavor. For alcohol like wine, flaming isn't necessary because the alcohol level is so low; in fact, it probably wouldn't even flame.

Flaming is a tricky and dangerous thing, and I recommend it only if you pay close attention to what you're doing. The vapors in hot alcohol are

*The beginning of a beautiful sauce. At this point, the white wine and chicken stock are mixing with caramelized onions and delicious cooked-on juices from the sautéed fish to form a flavorful liquid that will be simmered until slightly thickened.*





## Meat glaze

Meat glaze, called *glace de viande* (GLASS duh vee-AHND) in French, is a concentrated, gelatinous paste made by slowly and carefully reducing brown veal stock to about one-tenth of its original volume. A glaze can be made from fish or poultry stock also, but meat glaze is the most common. It is mainly used in sauces, but a spoonful or two can add flavor and color to other dishes like stews or soups as well.

To make about two cups of meat glaze, simmer five quarts of good-quality brown veal stock in a large pot, skimming about every fifteen minutes for the first couple of hours, then occasionally after that. Wipe away any scorched residue on the inside of the pot to keep the glaze from acquiring a burnt flavor. When the stock has reduced by about half, transfer it into a smaller, clean pot and continue reducing until the liquid has a very syrupy consistency. Strain the glaze into a clean container to cool; it will become firm and rubbery. Store the glaze in the refrigerator for up to two months.

If you don't want to make your own meat glaze, you can buy it from Summerfield Farm, 10044 James Monroe Highway, Culpeper, VA 22701; 703/547-9600 (8 ounces is \$7.50;



32 ounces is \$20, plus shipping; minimum order is \$65). You can also buy a similar ingredient called demi-glaze (which has only half the concentration of a true glaze) from D'Artagnan, Inc. (1/800-DARTAGNan). Theirs is a veal and duck stock (6.5 ounces is \$5, plus shipping) that was delicious in Chef Berruet's monkfish recipe. If you use demi-glaze, use twice the quantity called for in the recipe and reduce it a little longer.

—Martha Holmberg, Fine Cooking

*Meat glaze adds deep flavor to the monkfish sauce. The meat glaze melts from a thick jelly into a rich amber liquid that will mix with rum, cream, and lemon juice. While meat glaze is time-consuming to make, a little goes a long way, and it lasts months in the refrigerator.*

very volatile, so when they're ignited, the flames climb quickly and high. They die down instantly, too, but if you're not careful, you can singe your hair, clothes, or curtains with the first burst of flame. Always stand with your face well away from the pan. If you choose not to flame, just let the spirits simmer so the alcohol burns off.

During deglazing, scrape all the browned bits from the bottom of the sauté pan with a spoon. Let the liquid boil until it's reduced to a rich consistency—not thick, but concentrated in flavor and slightly syrupy in consistency. Then add the finishing touches. A little cream or butter for richness, a little lemon juice or capers for sharpness, fresh herbs for color and fragrance. Let these ingredients cook together for a few minutes, but if you've added butter, don't boil the sauce or the butter will separate and the sauce will be oily. Return the fish to the pan and let it simmer a few minutes in the sauce to complete the cooking and to blend all the flavors. Now you're ready to serve your *sauté à la minute*, full of fresh and lively flavor. I like to serve plain pasta, rice, or steamed potatoes with my sautés to soak up the delicious sauce.

### SAUTÉ OF COD WITH CAPERS AND ONIONS

All the ingredients in this dish are easy to come by, so you don't have to wait for a special occasion to make it. Cod is one of my favorite types of fish, and it doesn't get the credit it deserves. Fresh, good-quality cod is sweet and mild, with firm white flakes. Use fillets or steaks for this recipe. I would serve this dish with a fruity sauvignon blanc.

*Serves four.*

**4 cod fillets or steaks, about 6 oz. each**  
**Salt and pepper**  
**1 Tbs. olive oil**  
**6 Tbs. butter**  
**2 large onions, sliced thin**  
**1 cup dry white wine**  
**¾ cup reduced-salt chicken stock**  
**2 small sour pickles (cornichons), cut in julienne**  
**1 Tbs. drained capers**  
**1 Tbs. chopped fresh parsley**

Rinse the cod and pat dry. Season with salt and pepper. (If you're using cod steaks, leave the skin and bone intact during cooking to help the fish hold together. After cooking, just peel off the skin and pull out the bone.)

Heat the olive oil and 2 Tbs. of the butter in a large sauté pan. When the fat is hot, add the fish and sauté over medium-high heat until light brown, about 3 min. on each side. Remove the fish with a spatula and keep it warm. Pour off all but 1 Tbs. of the fat and add the sliced onions. Cook the onions over medium heat, stirring frequently, until



*When you know the basics of sautéing, making this cod dish is a snap. Onions, pickles, capers, and parsley come together in an unusual and satisfying garnish for the mild sautéed cod. The ingredients are easy to find, so you can make the dish anytime.*

they're soft and caramelized, 8 to 10 min.

Add the wine and stock and a little salt and pepper. Boil, scraping the bottom of the pan, until the liquid is reduced by about half and has a slightly syrupy consistency.

Put the fish and any accumulated juices back in the pan and cook for another minute or so, basting the fish with the sauce.

Add the remaining 4 Tbs. of butter and shake the pan until the butter is blended into the sauce. Do not boil, or the butter will separate and the sauce will be oily. Add the julienned pickle, capers, and parsley.

Arrange the fish on warmed individual plates or on a platter and spoon the sauce over the fish.

### **SAUTÉ OF MONKFISH WITH GINGER AND RUM**

I developed this dish after a visit to the West Indian island of Martinique, hence the rum. There they use cane syrup instead of honey. The meat glaze (see box on p. 33) in the sauce is strictly French, but I think it adds real depth of flavor. You can omit it, but the character of the dish will be different. Use a little more cream to make up the difference in volume of liquid. Monkfish is a very juicy fish, so I use a little flour and egg wash to help seal in the juices. My choice of wine for this dish would be a full-bodied, buttery California chardonnay or a rich French chardonnay like a Meursault. *Serves four.*

*The flavors in this monkfish sauté are deep and delicious. The meat glaze and rum give it real depth, the ginger and lemon juice add spark, and the cream rounds off the whole thing. Chopped chives are a colorful touch.*



*1½ lb. monkfish, cut into 1-in. slices*  
*6 Tbs. olive oil*  
*2 Tbs. grated fresh ginger*  
*1 Tbs. crushed black peppercorns*  
*1 Tbs. chopped fresh parsley*  
*Lemon juice*  
*Flour*  
*Egg wash (1 egg beaten with a few drops of olive oil and*  
*lemon juice, and salt and pepper)*  
*3 Tbs. dark rum*  
*6 Tbs. meat glaze*  
*2 tsp. honey*  
*½ cup heavy cream*  
*1 Tbs. chopped fresh chives*

Gently press the monkfish slices to flatten them slightly and pat dry. Mix half the olive oil with the ginger, peppercorns, parsley, and 2 tsp. lemon juice in a shallow dish. Arrange the monkfish in the dish, turning to coat with the marinade, and leave for 30 to 60 min. Remove the fish and wipe off all marinade.

Spread some flour on a piece of foil and put the egg wash in a shallow dish. Dip each piece of monkfish first in flour, shaking off the excess, then in egg wash. Do this immediately before you start to cook; the coating will become gooey if you let it sit more than a few minutes.

Heat the remaining 3 Tbs. olive oil in a sauté pan and when it's hot, add the monkfish. Sauté the fish over medium-high heat until light brown, about 3 min. per side, then remove the fish from the pan. Pour off the fat, return the fish to the pan, and add the rum. If you choose to flame the rum, stand back, dip a lighted match into the pan, and shake the pan until the flames subside. If you don't flame, just simmer about 30 seconds. Remove the fish again and keep it warm.

Add the meat glaze and bring it to a boil, scraping up the browned bits from the bottom of the pan. Add the honey and cream and boil for a few minutes to reduce slightly. Add salt, pepper, and more lemon juice to taste (the sauce should have a nice acidic edge to it). If the fish needs reheating, put it back in the pan and heat for a few seconds in the sauce. Otherwise, arrange the fish on a warmed platter or on individual plates and pour the sauce over it. Sprinkle with chopped chives.



*Fill pots on the stove. The author had a faucet plumbed into the top of his range so he doesn't have to lug pots of water from the kitchen sink.*

Jean-Charles Berruet came to Nantucket from France 28 years ago, adopted it as his new homeland, and has never left. Since 1970, he has been chef and owner, with his wife Anne, of The Chanticleer, an award-winning restaurant in the historic village of Siasconset. ♦



# Vegetables Make the Meal

Meatless main dish pleases the palate and the eye

BY KAYSEY McLOUGHLIN

I've been a vegetarian all my life, so I'm never at a loss for main dish ideas. New or part-time vegetarians, however, can find it difficult to make vegetables into main courses. While most cooks have a large repertoire of favorite salads and side dishes, they draw a blank when it comes to using vegetables as the central course of the meal.

In fact, when you abandon the notion that the main course must be meat, and when you realize the potential of the wide variety of delicious vegetables, fruits, legumes, and grains, you can enjoy great flexibility. Carefully layered seasoning, robust stocks, and tantalizing sauces will ensure that your meatless recipe is interesting and satisfying enough to be the focus of the meal.

## THE KEY TO FULL FLAVOR

This stuffed crookneck squash with tomato and pink-grapefruit sauce is one of my "signature dishes," often requested by my friends, whether vegetarian or not. The stuffing and sauce can be prepared up to one day ahead, but I wouldn't steam the squash more than an hour ahead of serving, to preserve its sweet flavor and tender texture.

I don't use too many spices and flavorings in this dish, but the ones I do include play an important role. Some contrast with the main ingredients to provide tension—mild vs. peppery, sweet vs. acid. Others amplify the primary flavors, extending the range from high and light to deep and dark.

**Understanding this "spectrum" of flavors is key to good vegetarian cooking.** Many vegetables provide flavors at the high end of the range—fresh, bright, grassy, green, peppery. The full, earthy flavors that make a dish rounder and mellow (and more reassuring to "meat-eaters") need to come from skillful seasoning and cooking.

Some "deep-end" seasonings include a splash of aged soy sauce, a pinch of woody, brown spice (such as coriander, cumin, or clove), a rich reduced



*Vegetable main courses are hearty and savory. Here, the flavors and colors of stuffed crookneck squash are highlighted beautifully by a tomato and pink-grapefruit sauce.*

The author carves the crookneck squash into hollow containers, using a paring knife and melon baller.

## CROOKNECK SQUASH WITH CREOLE VEGETABLE STUFFING

Serves four.

8 small (3-ounce) or 4 large (6-ounce) crookneck squash  
2 cups all-purpose vegetable stock (see recipe at right, or use a stock cube)  
1/8 teaspoon salt  
1/4 cup pearl barley  
2 tablespoons unsalted butter  
1 1/2 teaspoon finely chopped garlic  
3/4 cup chopped onion  
1/2 cup finely diced carrot  
1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg  
1/8 teaspoon ground cayenne  
1/2 cup finely diced celery  
1/2 cup finely diced green pepper  
3/4 cup fresh corn kernels  
1/2 teaspoon finely chopped fresh rosemary  
1 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme  
1/4 teaspoon Tabasco, more to taste  
1/4 teaspoon salt

## TOMATO AND PINK-GRAPEFRUIT SAUCE

Makes about 3 cups.

5 tablespoons unsalted butter  
1/2 teaspoon finely chopped garlic  
1 tablespoon rice-wine vinegar  
Juice from 1 pink grapefruit  
2 pounds tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and chopped, about 2 1/2 cups  
Peeled segments from 1 pink grapefruit, cut in 1/2-inch chunks (see Basics)  
Pinch ground cayenne  
1/2 teaspoon fresh thyme  
Salt



Cut a deep slice from the "bowl" of the squash to form the lid and to open the squash for carving.



Use just the tip of a paring knife for greater control when tracing around the edge of the cut face.



A few deep slashes will loosen the pulp for easy removal.



McLoughlin scoops out the pulp easily with a melon baller. She's careful not to make the walls too thick, which wouldn't allow enough room for the stuffing, nor too thin, because they could tear.

vegetable stock (see the sidebar at right), or even a few drops of molasses or Louisiana cane syrup.

Cooking sugary vegetables such as onions and carrots until lightly caramelized also adds full, mel-low flavor. In this recipe, I'm using a *mirepoix* (pronounced meer-ah-PWAH)—a mix of several diced aromatic vegetables added for flavoring. Grilling or charring larger vegetables will also add deeper, earthier flavors to a vegetarian dish.

## A WHOLE SQUASH AS FOCAL POINT

I've chosen yellow crookneck squash as the main ingredient for its mildly sweet flavor and smooth buttery texture, but also for its shape. By featuring a whole vegetable, rather than chunks or slices, this dish takes on more of a "main dish" character. You could almost equate the whole squash with a fillet of fish or a chop (though I certainly wouldn't!). If possible, choose unblemished, firm young squash, because the pulp and seeds, which are used in the stuffing, are sweet and moist. In more mature squash, the pulp and seeds will be coarse and dry. Regular yellow summer squash can be substituted, but the texture is more watery and the shape is not as pretty.

I carve out the rounded "bowl" of the crookneck squash to form a hollow container for the barley-and-vegetable stuffing. After steaming the squash containers, I fill them with the stuffing and then bake them briefly to unite the flavors of all the ingredients.

**Carve and steam the squash.** Wash the squash, blot them dry, and trim the dry stem ends. To decide where to slice the squash so that it sits attractively on the plate, place it on the counter and let it roll into its natural resting position. Cut a thick slice from the long side that's now parallel to the counter, to form a lid (see the photos at left). With the tip of a paring knife, carefully score a line 1/4-inch in from the edge of the cut face of the squash to make a border. Cut several slashes across the surface, and then scoop out the pulp with a melon baller or a small spoon to form a hollow container. Repeat with the other squash. Chop the pulp fine and set aside.

The squash needs very brief cooking because the thin walls in the hollowed-out portion will collapse and tear if overcooked. To stop the cooking immediately after you remove the squash from the



steamer, put them in a large bowl of ice water. Steam the squash in a covered steamer, 6 to 7 minutes for the squash containers and 2 to 3 minutes for the lids. Immerse them in the ice water, remove them immediately, drain, and pat dry.

### A GRAIN AND VEGETABLE STUFFING

The starch from the barley will mix with the stock and help bind the vegetables. The grain also adds an appealing chewiness.

**Cook the barley first,** before beginning your *mirepoix*. Bring 1¼ cups of the stock and the salt to a boil. Add the barley, cover, and simmer until the stock has been absorbed and the barley is plump and tender, 30 to 40 minutes. Set aside.

**Lightly brown the *mirepoix*.** I use butter in this recipe because I like the slightly nutty flavor it gives the stuffing, but olive oil would work, too. The brown, woody flavor of the nutmeg and the slight caramelization of the *mirepoix* vegetables add depth of flavor to the dish.

Heat the butter in a large frying pan until just foaming, add the garlic and onion, and sauté over medium-high heat until the onion turns clear. Add the carrot, nutmeg, and cayenne and continue cooking until the carrot is slightly soft and the onion begins to caramelize. Stir in the squash pulp, celery, green pepper, corn, and rosemary, and cook until the vegetables soften, another 3 to 5 minutes.

**Finish cooking the stuffing.** Add the remaining stock, the barley, thyme, Tabasco, and salt. Cook until all the ingredients are tender and the stock has reduced and been absorbed, stirring frequently, 10 to 12 minutes. Season with salt to taste and remove from the heat.

**Fill the squash containers.** Packing the stuffing firmly into the hollowed-out squash and then reheating everything together improves the dish by allowing the flavors to marry. Fill each squash with the stuffing, packing firmly with a spoon yet taking care not to tear the sides. If you like, the lids may be set back on top, or served alongside, topped with a spoonful of stuffing. Place all the filled squash and lids on a baking tray, cover with foil and bake at 400°F until heated through, about 15 minutes. (If the squash have been stuffed ahead and refrigerated, reheat at 375° for 35 to 45 minutes.) Serve with Tomato and Pink-Grapefruit Sauce and a bottle of Côtes du Rhône.

## Vegetable stock from peelings and parings

I make an all-purpose vegetable stock from the remnants of several days of cooking—trimmings and peelings that might otherwise be wasted, which I hoard like a small treasure in an accessible container just inside my freezer. When I'm ready to make the stock, I inventory what I've saved by just looking at the frozen "lump" to see what vegetables I need more or less of. I add a *mirepoix* and a little seasoning to round out the flavor. In this way, intensity and usefulness are standardized.

Good items to collect for all-purpose stock include corn cobs and husks, snow-pea strings, tiny garlic cloves too small for peeling and chopping, tomato skins and seeds, eggplant skins, clean potato parings, lettuce, and bits of apple or pear. If you're not sure whether an ingredient will add a nice flavor, simmer it on its own in water and then taste it. If you like it, add it to the main stock pot.

Throw away woody stems, rough peelings, hard seeds, and blemished, gritty, or too-old pieces—remember you're going to eat this.—K.McL.

### ALL-PURPOSE VEGETABLE STOCK

Makes 1 quart.

*All your accumulated scraps, including, or plus, the following:*

2 cups coarsely chopped onion  
1 cup coarsely chopped celery  
2 cups coarsely chopped  
crookneck squash or 2 corn  
cobs, cut in pieces  
1¾ cups coarsely chopped  
carrot  
1 cup seeded and coarsely  
chopped green pepper  
1 cup coarsely chopped tomato  
½ tsp. black peppercorns  
½ tsp. coriander seed  
½ tsp. fennel seed  
10 stems parsley, cilantro, or  
thyme, or a combination  
1 bay leaf  
3 cloves garlic  
3 quarts water

Bring to a boil, simmer approximately 1½ hours until reduced by ⅔, then strain.

### A SPARKLING SAUCE

In this easy recipe, pink grapefruit is an unexpected ingredient that adds a lot of fruitiness and a nice bitter edge. Rice-wine vinegar adds another sweet-sharp note. (If I don't have rice-wine vinegar, I use a drop of honey and white-wine vinegar.)

In a large frying pan (preferably not cast iron), heat 2 tablespoons butter and sauté the garlic until golden. Add the vinegar and grapefruit juice, and simmer over high heat until reduced by half, 2 to 3 minutes. This is important, because if the liquid isn't reduced enough, the sauce will be too thin and taste acidic. Add the chopped tomato and the grapefruit pieces and cook over medium heat for about 5 minutes. Turn off the heat, add the cayenne and thyme, and then whisk in the remaining butter. Add salt to taste.

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Kaysey McLoughlin has cooked professionally in fine restaurants for over a decade, in Chicago, New York, and New Orleans. She recently moved to Tennessee with her husband and her baby son, who is a third-generation vegetarian. ♦





K. H. Reed

*Fresh fruit and a little sugar make intensely flavored preserves. Fruit butters are smooth and readily spreadable. Fruit cheeses are smooth, too, but firm enough to mold and slice.*



# Making Flavorful Fruit Butters and Cheeses

Old-fashioned preserves for health-conscious cooks

BY AMANDA BURTON

Unless you read old cookbooks, you may not know about fruit butters and fruit cheeses. Despite the names “cheese” and “butter,” they are not dairy products, but rather intensely flavorful fruit spreads. Because they require somewhat less sugar than do most jams, these old-fashioned preserves are ideal for today’s health-conscious cooks. In general, a fruit butter has a smooth, rather thick consistency and is readily spreadable. A fruit cheese also is smooth, but it’s dense enough to hold its shape from a mold, and it can be cut into soft slices or wedges, hence the use of the term “cheese.” Both preserves contain fruit, very small quantities of water, and moderate quantities of sugar, sometimes with the addition of flavorings or spices. Fruit butters and cheeses differ from jam because of their smooth, seedless texture, which is achieved by passing the cooked fruit through a sieve before adding the sugar and continuing to cook.

I have a particular interest in cookery and preserving from late Victorian and Edwardian household practices because of my family, Anglo-Irish colonials, who arrived in Canada in the early 19th century. A long-lived and sprightly group, their traditions did not fade, and I grew up among three generations of women who baked and canned with little regard for the passing decades. I grew up eating the fruit butters and cheeses that my grandmother and great-aunts made, but many people are unfamiliar with these special preserves, save for apple butter, a kind of thickened applesauce, usually heavily spiced. To me apple butter is not the best example of this type of preserve, because the real beauty of fruit butters and cheeses lie in their intense fruit

flavor, unmasked by heavy-handed spices.

Fruit butters and cheeses are memorable condiments. Excellent with toast or scones, they also add a welcome dimension to a simple meal of cold meats, cheese, and bread. They can flavor oatmeal or plain yogurt, top waffles or pancakes, and fill blintzes or crêpes. They go well with warm-from-the-oven bread pudding or homemade tapioca pudding. Fruit butters also make wonderful fillings for little tart shells or pastry cases. They can add a touch of summer’s best fruits just when winter is at its dreariest.

## TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL PRESERVING

Recipes for fruit butters and cheeses from various authors and eras are maddeningly inconsistent. Nineteenth-century recipes leave a great deal up to the presumed skill of the cook, whereas today’s recipes are more detailed and precise. At first I thought the breezy writing style of a hundred years ago was merely quaint, until I began to realize the implications. Preserving is an inexact and intuitive science because success depends on a host of variables that no recipe can predict. The relative ripeness of the fruit, or the proportion of ripe fruit to green, determines the acid level and the pectin, sugar, and water content of the cooked pulp. In confectionery and preserving processes, cane sugar behaves differently from beet sugar (see “Sugar,” at right), and the two are often unidentifiable by brand. Cooking pots and stoves vary in ways that affect times and temperatures; a drafty kitchen on a cold day can measurably slow things down. All these things require you to reinterpret a recipe uniquely each time you make it.

Here is my advice to help you do this:

**Fruit**—Fruit that’s slightly green has more pectin (which helps the preserve to set), more acid, less sugar and less water than fully ripe fruit. A proportion of 75 percent fully ripe to 25 percent slightly green fruit is desirable. Preserving should not be viewed as a way to use up overripe or blemished fruit, because bruised or blemished flesh will change the chemistry of the batch.

**Water**—The fruit itself contains water, but you’ll need to add more during cooking as well, because you need enough water to break down the structure of the fruit and to prevent sticking. However, the more water you add, the longer you have to cook to evaporate it. Prolonged cooking does nothing for the flavor of the fruit, which was at its peak *before* you started cooking. Before cooking, squeeze or mash the fruit to express some of its own juice. Add no more water than you need to prevent initial sticking. The water that clings to the fruit from washing may be adequate. Remember that water weighs approximately one pound per pint. Later, when you weigh your fruit pulp to determine how much sugar to add, the final result will be affected by whatever water has not evaporated in the first cooking.

**Sugar**—Cane sugar will produce a sweeter finished product. You may like this or not, but don’t alter the amount of sugar you use to change the taste because you’ll also alter the chemistry of the setting process. Beet sugar has more impurities and so produces more scum during cooking which you must remove, slightly reducing your yield. Some recipes suggest heating sugar in the oven before adding it

to the fruit; the purpose of this is to avoid sudden drops of temperature to the batch. I've found that there's no need for this step if I add sugar slowly, stirring to prevent the formation of lumps.

**Equipment**—Your pot should be heavy to prevent scorching and nonreactive (stainless steel or enameled) so no metallic flavor is imparted to the fruit, which is acidic. Stove burners vary in their specified thermal output; this means only you can know how high a flame to use to achieve a good, even boil without risk of scorching. Because of this variance, recipe times are often meaningless. Do what you can to block significant drafts around your stove, because they'll slow you down and make hot-packing (putting the boiling-hot preserves into equally hot, sterile canning jars) a fevered race against the chill. If your batch doesn't seem thick enough, keep cooking regardless of the clock.

If you keep my advice in mind, the general procedure and the recipes that follow should make intuitive sense and seem simple, as indeed cooks thought they were a hundred years ago.

## THE GENERAL PROCEDURE

Remove all the stems and leaves from the fruit, wash it well, and drain it in a colander. Cut away any bruises or blemishes completely. Cut large fruit in quarters and remove large stones. If you're using a motor-driven puréeing tool, such as the Cuisinart Power Strainer attachment, it

isn't necessary to seed, stone, core, or peel most fruit. If you don't have such a tool, the traditional method calls for pressing the fruit through a sieve to separate it from its skin, seeds, and stones.

Crush the fruit slightly to release enough juice to prevent sticking during cooking, or add the smallest amount of water necessary to do the same. Cook the fruit, stirring often, over moderate heat until it's quite soft. A froth will rise while the fruit is boiling. This is not the same as the sugar scum that happens later, so don't remove it. Cool the fruit slightly and then purée. Weigh the resulting pulp to determine the amount of sugar to be added. For a fruit butter, the proportion is usually eight ounces of sugar per pound of pulp, or a ratio of one to two. A fruit cheese generally requires more sugar, between twelve and sixteen ounces per pound of pulp.

Return the pulp to a clean pot and add the sugar gradually over moderate heat,

which have been painted inside with food-grade glycerin (available at pharmacies) or a flavorless oil such as canola oil. Or you can hot-pack butters and cheeses in canning jars following standard canning procedures. For more information on canning, see *Putting Food By*, by Janet Greene, Ruth Hertzberg, and Beatrice Vaughan (Viking Press, 1988. \$12.95, softcover; 420 pp. ISBN 0-8289-0645-9).



*A power sieve purées the fruit quickly and quietly. The author swears by her Cuisinart Power Strainer, an attachment that fits inside a citrus juicer. The alternative is to work the cooked fruit through a sieve.*



*Do remove the scum that rises during the second boiling (see above), which comes from impurities in the sugar. Skim it off with a perforated metal spoon.*



*The difference between froth and scum. The froth that rises from the fruit during the first boiling (shown above) is simply fruit juice. Don't remove it.*

stirring to prevent lumps. Stir often to prevent sticking and skim the scum that rises to the surface as the mixture boils. Use a clean, perforated skimmer for this task. Clean the skimmer frequently in warm water, wiping it dry after each cleaning.

Continue cooking until the mixture is thick and creamy for a butter, or until a spoon drawn through the mixture leaves a clean line at the bottom of the pot for a cheese. You can pour fruit butters into jars or cheeses into molds or small terrines

Store preserves packed in molds or clamp-lidded jars in the refrigerator; if you've canned them with two-piece, screw-on lids, store them in the pantry.

Notice the absence of times and temperatures in my recipes. Making fruit butters and cheeses is a simple process, and these preserves are reliably finished when they behave as I've described above. Your methods don't always have to be perfect. I undercooked a batch of peach butter, which consequently didn't set. A week later I boiled it again briefly, and it set beautifully.

Set aside a whole day to spend on this project, so you can complete four or five recipes. Your pantry will fill up in a satisfying way.

## TOKAY GRAPE BUTTER

Look for Tokay grapes, which are mottled red over green, during the grape-harvest season. Here in California that's early September and





*Enjoy the intense flavors of summer fruits throughout the year. You can hot-pack fruit butters in two-piece, screw-top canning jars and store them in the cupboard. Fruit cheeses can be packed into small molds and stored in the refrigerator.*

To prevent spoilage, be sure the storage jar or mold is perfectly clean. Wipe the rim of a canning jar with a damp towel to ensure a good seal. A small amount of matter, even juice, will prevent a perfect vacuum seal.

October. Or use any grape with an interesting, distinctive flavor. Yields three 8-ounce jars.

**4 lb. grapes**  
Water  
Sugar

Wash and stem the grapes. Add no more than 1 cup of water and cook until tender and collapsed. Process through a Power Strainer or sieve. Weigh the pulp and add 8 oz. of sugar for each pound of pulp. Cook until thick and creamy, stirring often and skimming the scum that rises while boiling. Hot-pack in canning jars.

### PEACH BUTTER

*Yields three to four 8-ounce jars.*

Slice 4 lb. peaches, discarding stones. (If the skins are thick and fuzzy, blanch and peel them before you slice them.) Cook with 1 to 2 cups of water, depending on juiciness of fruit, until very soft. Proceed as for Tokay Grape Butter.

### PLUM BUTTER

*Yields three to four 8-ounce jars.*

Wash and stem 4 lb. plums. Crush a few to produce enough juice to prevent sticking, adding a little water if needed. Cover and cook until tender and collapsed. Proceed as for Tokay Grape Butter.

### PRUNE BUTTER

*Yields six 8-ounce jars.*

Soak 4 lb. pitted prunes overnight in water to cover. Simmer in the same water until tender. Proceed as for Tokay Grape Butter, adding the juice and grated rind of 1 lemon during the second cooking.

### BLACKBERRY OR RASPBERRY CHEESE

*Yields three 8-ounce jars.*

**2 lb. blackberries or raspberries**  
Water  
Sugar

Rinse and pick over the berries. Add the least amount of water possible to prevent sticking. Cover and simmer until very soft.

Process through a Power Strainer or sieve. Weigh the pulp and add 14 oz. of sugar to each pound of pulp. Cook, stirring frequently and skimming the scum that rises while boiling, until a spoon drawn through the mixture leaves a clean line behind it on the bottom of the pan. Hot-pack into canning jars, or pour into molds or small terrines painted with flavorless oil or food-grade glycerin.

### CRANBERRY CHEESE

*Yields three to four 8-ounce jars.*

Boil 2 lb. cranberries in water to cover until very tender. Process through a Power Strainer or sieve. Weigh the pulp and add a pound of sugar for each pound of pulp. Proceed as for Blackberry Cheese. If you like, add the juice and rind of one orange for every 2 lb. of cranberry pulp during the second cooking; this will lengthen the cooking time somewhat.

### CHERRY CHEESE

*Yields three to four 8-ounce jars.*

Wash and stem 4 lb. cherries. Mash or squeeze them slightly to release the juice; add just enough water to prevent sticking. Cook until tender and proceed as for Blackberry Cheese.

### DAMSON CHEESE

*Yields three to four 8-ounce jars.*

Remove stems and leaves and wash 4 lb. damsons. Squeeze to express juice; add less than a cup of water if needed to prevent sticking. Cook until tender and proceed as for Blackberry Cheese, adding  $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. almond extract during the second cooking.

In 1989, Amanda Burton started making and selling fruit curds and marmalades commercially. Her San Francisco Bay Area business, Burton & Company, sells its products at regional farmers' markets and specialty food stores. At this point, Burton only makes fruit butters and cheeses at home. ♦





# Jamaican-Style Barbecue

Making and using hot and spicy “jerk”

*Jamaican jerk marinade is full of hot, spicy, and herbal ingredients, like Scotch bonnet peppers, scallions, ginger, garlic, thyme, bay, cinnamon, peppercorns, nutmeg, and allspice.*

BY JAY B. MCCARTHY

Growing up in Jamaica, I learned to love the island food, especially the jerk—Jamaican barbecue—we ate at roadside stands.

Despite its name, Jamaican jerk has no similarities to dried meat jerky. The name comes from the way the meat was “jerked” (turned) regularly to ensure even cooking. And, like barbecue, the term *jerk* refers to the seasoning, the finished product, and the cooking method.

Jerked meat is cooked slowly over a fire of green

wood. In Jamaica, the wood—traditionally allspice (called pimento), but sometimes other woods—that’s used to make the barbecue frame imparts half the luscious depth of flavor to jerked meats. The other half comes from the jerk marinade itself, which is made of herbs, spices, and Scotch bonnet peppers.

When I began cooking in the United States, I explored ways to recreate the hot, spicy, herbal mixture that haunted my palate. Now, as a chef, I regularly incorporate jerk into my restaurant menu. The



jerk mixture is easy to make, and it can be used on many kinds of meat, poultry, and fish. If the traditional method of roasting jerk over green wood doesn't suit you, you can use any kind of grill setup, a smoker, or your oven.

### TRADITIONAL AND NOT-SO-TRADITIONAL JERK

In the past, pork was the only meat that was jerked. Freshly slaughtered pigs and wild boar were—and still are—chopped coarse, rubbed with the marinade, and then slowly roasted until well done with a crisp, crunchy outside. The meat is served hot with extra Scotch bonnet sauce or jerk marinade, and it's often accompanied by “festival,” a fried cornmeal dumpling that's like a hushpuppy, but longer and sweet.

Today, jerk stands in Jamaica offer both pork and chicken. They're the most affordable and readily available meats; beef is very scarce and expensive.

Recently, jerked fish and jerked lobster have made their way onto restaurant menus both in Jamaica and in the United States. Jerked fish is often referred to as “slash and burn,” from the slashing of the fish skin to help the flavors penetrate and the charring of the marinade as the fish is slowly roasted. Jerked lobster is boiled with jerk seasoning in the water, or split, rubbed with butter and jerk, and broiled. Due to the much shorter cooking times, the jerk doesn't permeate fish or lobster very deeply and is used more as a condiment.

There are far more food items around the planet that lend themselves to be jerked than are available in Jamaica, however. I have made jerked rabbit, quail, pheasant, and squab. My most recent innovation is Jerky Turkey, as I like to call it (see the recipe on p. 45). Jerk is a fantastic marinade for fish steaks and grilled squash and eggplant. I've even made jerked breads to use as stuffing, and spread jerk on pizza crust.

### JERK: THE SEASONING

Jerk is a thick paste, sometimes called jerk rub, which can be thinned with oil, vinegar, or a combination of the two to make a pourable, saucelike marinade. You can also use soy sauce to thin jerk rub, but it isn't traditional.

There are good commercial jerk seasonings available. Walkerswood is my favorite, though I always add a Scotch bonnet pepper or two for some extra heat. The best way, however, is to make the stuff yourself.

The core ingredients of jerk are scallions, thyme, allspice, Scotch bonnets, black pepper, nutmeg, and cinnamon. The scallions used in Jamaica are more like



baby red onions, but green scallions work fine. The thyme is a very small-leaved, intensely flavored English thyme. I prefer Jamaican allspice, which has more pungency than allspice from elsewhere. McCormick and Spice Islands both market Jamaican allspice.

Scotch bonnet peppers add a big flavor to jerk (see Sources below). They have what I think of as a “round” taste—intense heat with apricot or fruity overtones. The best substitute for a Scotch bonnet is a fresh habanero pepper, which is becoming increasingly available nationwide. (Frieda's Finest, a specialty produce distributor in California, sells a thousand pounds a day!) But to my taste, habaneros have all of the heat and none of the fruitiness of Scotch bonnets, so I always add a little honey or fruit jam or syrup when I use habaneros for jerk.

Most Jamaicans grind their dry ingredients by hand in a mortar and pestle. You'd never find a food processor at a jerk stand. The most advanced form of machine probably would be a hand-cranked meat grinder, followed closely by a machete. I think this hands-on approach gives Jamaican jerk that extra cup of love and caring that makes it taste so good, and it's why I prefer to hand-chop all the ingredients. If you're not so inclined, you can use a blender or food processor to process everything except the

### *Jerk rub is versatile.*

*The thick paste of herbs, spices, and peppers can be used to flavor many items, from pork to poultry to fish. In Jamaica, jerk pork is traditional, but McCarthy has found that stuffing jerk under the skin of a turkey breast produces delectable, moist, and pleasantly spicy results.*

### SOURCES FOR SCOTCH BONNETS AND HABANEROS

**Dean & DeLuca**, 560 Broadway, New York, NY 10012; 800/221-7714

**Don Alfonso Foods**, PO Box 201988, Austin, TX 78720-1988; 800/456-6100. They grow their own peppers; available in summer.

**Melissa's**, PO Box 21127, Los Angeles, CA 90021; 800/588-0151. Peppers are imported; available year-round.

**Stonewall Chili Pepper Co.**, PO Box 241, Stonewall, TX 78671; 800/232-2995. They grow their own peppers; available in summer.





*Chopping the ingredients by hand gives a better texture. When chopping the individual ingredients by hand, aim for pieces of consistent size. If you make jerk in a blender or food processor, be careful not to overprocess. And if you do use a machine to make jerk, you should still chop the thyme and peppers by hand, or you'll end up with green mush.*

*Fresh-ground spices make a world of difference, so McCarthy grinds his own. He keeps a coffee mill dedicated to the purpose so he can make potent ground spices as needed.*



thyme and Scotch bonnets, which you should mince by hand. This way you'll end up with jerk rub that has great texture instead of being just green mush.

I'm also a firm believer in grinding my own spices fresh as I need them. Whole spices keep their aromatic oils (and therefore their flavor) better than ground spices do. I simply pulverize whole spices in a coffee mill.

#### **JERK: THE PROCESS**

Jerking is a two-step process. First you marinate the meat for at least four hours; overnight is better. Then

you slow-cook it, preferably over hardwood coals, because the sweet hardwood smoke contributes half the flavor of the finished jerk. Here in Texas, I use pecan, apple, or my favorite, peach. Maple, walnut, almond, or hickory would be fine, too.

The traditional Jamaican way is to dig a pit about two feet deep and set stones or cinderblocks at each end to support the green sticks of the grill framework about eight inches above the coals. The fire is started and when the coals are ready, the sticks are set in place, and the meat is put on the barbecue. Banana leaves used to be placed on top to help trap the smoky heat; nowadays it's more likely to be a sheet of galvanized zinc. The meats are "jerked," or turned, every 15 to 20 minutes. Pork takes two to four hours and chicken 45 minutes to two hours, depending on the fire. The slower and longer the cooking process, the better the finished jerk.

To make jerk pork at home, I marinate the meat and refrigerate it overnight. I use a lot of jerk in proportion to the amount of meat, normally two to three cups of jerk rub for a 6-pound pork butt roast. I prepare the pork butt by removing the bone (you can have the butcher do this). Then I place it skin-side down on the cutting board and cut it at 1½-inch intervals straight down to, but not through, the bottom layer of fat next to the skin. I rotate the roast 90° and again cut at 1½-inch intervals. This makes a lot of stubby, square fingers of meat, all connected on one side by fat and skin. I rub the jerk deeply into these pieces of meat.

About an hour before I begin cooking the roast, I start a fire in my covered grill with mesquite. When the mesquite coals are ashen, I add peach or pecan wood (I do this because there's always more mesquite available than fruitwood). I put a drip pan directly under the meat to prevent scorching. I often pour half a bottle of Jamaican Red Stripe beer into the drip pan (I drink the other half). I set the pork on the grill rack 6 to 8 inches from the coals, cover it with a pot or lid, and "jerk" it every 15 to 20 minutes until the meat is tender, spicy, and succulent. By the time the pork is done, the pan's contents are a great dipping sauce.

You can also cook jerk in the oven. See the turkey recipe at right.

#### **JERK RUB**

You'll get a better texture if you chop the herbs and peppers by hand. A food processor or blender is a time-saver, but it tends to make an overly smooth purée. If you want to use a machine, be sure to pour in the half cup of oil first, and then add the herbs. The thyme and peppers should *always* be chopped by hand and added at the end. Be careful with the peppers, however. Their oils can really burn your eyes and skin, so be sure to wash your hands when you're finished chopping. And don't add the seeds unless you like a lot of heat.

If you grind the spices in a coffee mill or spice grinder, start with the nutmeg and cinnamon. Grind these until



coarse, then add the other spices, and grind them all together until fine. If you use preground spices, you might need to use more—up to double—depending on how long they've been sitting in your cupboard.

Jerk rub is best after a few hours, when its flavors have had a chance to meld. The rub keeps for up to three months in the refrigerator. I tend to jerk everything in sight for a week and then have to make more. *Makes 3 cups.*

#### **30 scallions**

*5-in. piece fresh ginger, peeled*

*¼ cup fresh garlic cloves, peeled*

*6 bay leaves*

*6 to 8 Scotch bonnet peppers, seeded, chopped fine by hand (substitute habaneros if necessary)*

*2 tsp. freshly ground nutmeg, preferably Jamaican*

*2 tsp. freshly ground cinnamon (about 1 stick)*

*1 Tbs. freshly ground allspice, preferably Jamaican*

*2 Tbs. black peppercorns, ground fresh*

*2 Tbs. whole coriander seeds, ground fresh*

*1 Tbs. sea or kosher salt*

*1 cup fresh thyme leaves, chopped fine by hand*

#### **OPTIONAL:**

*½ cup oil (only if using a blender)*

*1 tsp. apricot jam or honey (only if using habaneros instead of Scotch bonnets)*

Chop the scallions, ginger, garlic, bay leaves, and peppers separately until moderately fine. Combine these ingredients and chop until fine. Put in a bowl and add the ground spices. Stir in the chopped thyme and mix well.

### **JERKY TURKEY**

I usually jerk turkey over peachwood or applewood coals, but here's a method for the oven that's easy and tastes great. Brining the turkey for several hours flavors the meat a little, and helps the smoke and marinade flavors penetrate the meat during cooking. The roasting process mellows the intense heat of the peppers, and renders the jerk pleasantly spicy and aromatic. The leftovers make delicious sandwiches or fantastic tacos.

If there's any fat in the turkey breast cavity, you can chop it up and mix it with the jerk rub. Alternatively, you can use a few tablespoons of softened butter. The fat or butter will make the jerk even more succulent. *Serves twelve.*

#### **11-lb. bone-in turkey breast**

*1½ to 2 cups jerk rub (see recipe above)*

*Salt and pepper*

#### **FOR THE BRINE:**

*1 cup dried hot chiles*

*2 cups brown sugar*

*1 cup sea or kosher salt*

*4-in. piece fresh ginger, peeled and chopped*

*2 Tbs. whole allspice*

*½ cup dried thyme*

*3 gal. cold water*

Combine all the brine ingredients in a large, nonreactive container. Stir until the sugar and salt have dissolved. Submerge the turkey breast in the brine, refrigerate it, and let it soak at least two but not much more than eight hours.

Remove the turkey from the brine and carefully work your hand under the breast skin to separate it from the meat. Apply the jerk rub under the skin, massaging it evenly over the breast. Be sure you get it all the way to the other end of the breast. Set the turkey in a roasting pan and dust lightly with salt and pepper. Roast in a 350°F oven for about 3 hours. Baste every 30 min. or so with the pan drippings. When the turkey is firm to the touch, it's ready,



*When the pork is cut into "fingers," the jerk rub penetrates better. McCarthy bones a pork butt roast, makes deep cuts in two directions, and then spreads jerk rub all over it. Smoked over a fruitwood fire or roasted in the oven to a crackling crispness, it's Jamaican-style barbecue at home.*



*McCarthy provides a pocket in the turkey for the jerk by carefully inserting his hand between the skin and meat. He then rubs the meat generously with the jerk, making sure it gets all the way to the other end of the breast.*

though you could check the internal temperature with a meat thermometer; it should register 165°F. Let the turkey rest for about 10 min. before you cut the breast from the bone. I like to cut one breast side completely away from the bone, and then carve it crosswise, so every slice has a strip of crisp skin with a layer of jerk beneath.

*In 1983, Jay B. McCarthy abandoned aerospace engineering for the kitchen. He is chef at Cascabel in San Antonio, Texas, where he practices a blend of Texan- and Jamaican-flavored cooking. He's currently working on a Jamaican cookbook that will be available from Crossing Press this year. ♦*





Flavor homemade yogurt cheese with anything you like. The creamy texture and tangy flavor blend deliciously with fresh herbs, chopped garlic, or pungent spices like black pepper.

# Turn Yogurt into Cheese

How can something so easy be so good—and low in fat, too?

BY ANNE STERLING

I often long for those snow-white, unripened cheeses displayed in cheesecloth bundles in the dairy shops of Paris, where I lived for many years. That's when I make my own yogurt cheese. It's similar to the French *fromage frais* I'm homesick for, even though the authentic cheese doesn't start out as yogurt. Yogurt cheese is easy to make and it's versatile (see the box above right), delicious alone or mixed into other dishes. It has a creamy texture, even when made with nonfat yogurt, and because of that, it's been hailed as a "miracle" substitute for high-fat cream cheese, mayonnaise, and sour cream.

## JUST ADD YOGURT AND WAIT

Making yogurt cheese couldn't be simpler: just spoon some yogurt into a filter and wait. The liquid whey drains out, leaving the thick and creamy milk solids and butterfat behind. By controlling the draining time, I can make the cheese light or dense and spreadable.

The only difficult step in the process is choosing the yogurt, which can range from very tart to quite

bland. Though the protein in the drained milk solids buffers the acid taste, the taste of the cheese will be similar to the taste of the undrained yogurt, so choose a yogurt that tastes good to you right out of the carton. Check the expiration date to get the freshest possible batch.

Making your own yogurt can save money if you plan to make pounds of cheese. It may also be necessary if you want a richer cheese made from whole milk. Many stores only carry low- and nonfat yogurts. Yogurt cheese made from whole milk will blend more smoothly in warm dishes and will stay creamy when toasted under the broiler. Nonfat yogurt cheese gets chewy and crumbly when broiled. There's only one rule to follow when choosing yogurt—don't use yogurt that contains gelatin, because gelatin inhibits the whey from draining. Pectin, which is found in some brands of yogurt, will not interfere with draining.

## PICK A FLAVOR

Yogurt cheese is great just plain, but I like to add a little salt (about one teaspoon per quart of yogurt), and often I'll add other savory ingredients. Some possibilities include fresh herbs, curry powder, minced garlic, or chopped black olives. Experiment by mixing the flavoring ingredient into a little



# What to do with your homemade cheese

- Roll bite-sized balls in chopped nuts or chopped fresh herbs to eat as canapés
- Marinate bite-sized balls in olive oil and rosemary to serve as a snack or on a salad
- Pipe into hollowed-out vegetables for hors d'oeuvres
- Arrange slices on rounds of French bread, broil, and serve with a salad or soup
- Mix with chutney to use as a dip or spread
- Mix with rice for stuffed grape leaves
- Spread on crackers or bagels
- Mix with honey and make "cream-filled" sandwich cookies
- Stir into guacamole
- Blend with pesto and toss with pasta—A.S.

yogurt and do a taste test. Just remember the final product will be creamy and more mellow.

I stir any flavorings into the yogurt before I put it in the filter to drain; this allows the flavors to ripen. Also, if I'm aiming for a firm cheese, it's easier to shape if the flavorings are added first. Stirring them in after draining could loosen the texture.

## THE SETUP

To begin your cheesemaking, you need to assemble your draining equipment. A funnel lined with several thicknesses of cheesecloth or an unbleached coffee filter is one option. I usually use my old coffeemaker cone, lined with a filter. Recently, though, I bought a handy device made specifically for the purpose—The Really Creamy Yogurt Cheese Funnel—which drains two cups of yogurt, requires no paper filter or cheesecloth, and comes apart to store flat in a drawer. Set this funnel over a large measuring cup or a jar.

Whether to drain the yogurt in or out of the refrigerator is up to you. In principle, the high acid level of the yogurt inhibits the growth of harmful bacteria at room temperature, but there's no way to judge how acid the yogurt really is (taste is not an indication). The yogurt drains slightly faster at room temperature, and the taste seems slightly better. But for safety, it's a good idea to drain the cheese in the refrigerator. Place a saucer on top of the funnel or fit a plastic bag over the top to keep out refrigerator odors.

## THE RESULTS

Yields will vary slightly between types of yogurt, different brands, and even from season to season. After an hour or two of draining, you should have a creamy consistency, much like sour cream. For a thick yogurt cheese that can be shaped and sliced, drain at least 8 and up to 24 hours. One quart of yogurt yields about 1½ cups of firm cheese and 2½ cups of whey.

The whey is delicious and nutritious, so don't discard it. Do as the Lebanese do and add mint and

ice for a refreshing beverage, or use it in place of water to make rice.

When the cheese has drained to the consistency you want, remove it from the filter. You can mold it into a log shape by rolling it up in plastic wrap or wax paper, or you can roll it between your palms into canapé-size balls. Cover the cheese in plastic wrap and keep it refrigerated until you're ready to serve it. The cheese gets more tart with age, so plan to eat it within a week.

*Anne Sterling is a former director of La Varenne Cooking School in Paris. She now teaches food classes for adults and children in New Jersey. ♦*



*The setup is simple. Sterling puts the yogurt in a coffee filter set in the cone from her coffeemaker. The whey drains from the yogurt, leaving a thick and creamy "cheese."*

Photo: Robert Marnala



# A Passion for Lobster

How a Maine chef captures all the flavor from these expensive crustaceans

BY SAM HAYWARD

When Europeans first settled in coastal New England, lobsters were so plentiful that farmers plowed them into fields as fertilizer. There are accounts of lobsters crawling onto dry land to escape an overcrowded ocean floor. Indentured servants, contracting passage to America, set a limit to how many lobsters could be included in their diets. Things sure have changed. Once abundant, Maine lobsters are now a luxury.

Even here on the coast, the price of lobster is high, so I take advantage of every flavor-bearing part of them. On top of the rich tail and claw meat, I use the liquids released during shelling, the vegetable-, wine-, and lobster-flavored court bouillon in which the lobster was poached, and even the shells. I'm also fond of the soft, olive-green tomalley found in the body cavity, and the bright-red roe in the tail and body of many female lobsters. I use all of these to strengthen the delicate lobster flavor in dishes such as Lobster Cakes with Basil and Lobster Coulis or, my family's favorite, Lobster Chowder (recipes on pp. 52–53).

The Maine lobster, as *Homarus americanus* is popularly called, is fished commercially from Long Island Sound to Newfoundland. The only lobster similar to it is the Brittany lobster, found on the European shores of the Atlantic and North Sea. Other so-called lobsters exist all around the globe, though these are clawless and inferior impostors, as any Mainer can tell you. The langouste of France, the spiny or rock lobster of the tropical Atlantic, and the

**Nothing beats a Maine lobster.** Lobster's sweet, tender, and delicately flavored meat is irresistible simply cooked and dipped in butter, as a topping for pasta, or made into chowder or lobster cakes.

Photos: Suzanne Roman



slipper of Southeast Asia have more of a shrimplike flavor, and the only edible part of them is their tail.

Maine lobsters have a sweeter, more delicate flavor and a more tender texture than these clawless lobsters, and they yield additional meat from the claws, knuckles, and legs. As a bonus to cooks, Maine lobsters are available live and whole, which means that more flavor and food is available in the juices and shells that come with them.

### HOW TO CHOOSE THEM

When buying Maine lobsters, make sure that they're alive. A healthy "bug" will arch its back and raise its claws menacingly, while both a sleepy lobster and a dead lobster will have drooping claws and tail. I always check to see if the mouth parts are moving because the gills located there will be faintly waving for oxygen if the lobster has any life left in him. While a recently expired lobster may still be fine to eat, a long-dead lobster can contain toxic amounts of dangerous bacteria. The dead lobster's own digestive enzymes will decompose the flesh, making the meat mushy and tasteless and tainting the wonderful juices from the body cavity.

Lobsters won't live long out of the water, so it's best to buy and cook them the same day. Keep lobsters in the refrigerator in a paper bag until you're ready to put them in the pot.

**Size**—Years ago a premium was placed on really big lobsters of ten pounds or more. These are now rare, and it's illegal to take them in Maine waters. For all their showiness, the meat on these monsters is generally tough and lacks the delicate sweetness I prefer. I've found that the smaller the lobster, the denser and smoother the fibers in its meat. The smallest lobsters legally taken in Maine, called chickens, weigh between sixteen and twenty ounces. A good hard-shell lobster of this weight with two claws will yield about five ounces of meat to an experienced picker. In my opinion, three one-pound lobsters will taste better—

and represent a better value—than one three-pounder that will cost the diner a small fortune.

**Females**—Cooks prize female lobsters for their unripened eggs, called roe or coral (see the sidebar on p. 51). Delicately flavored, these blackish-green eggs turn bright red when cooked. There are two ways to distinguish a female from a male. First, the female's tail is broad and flat; the edges are slightly splayed out. The edges of the male's tail curve around as if they want to connect in a complete circle (see the illustration below). Second, the tiny first pair of swimmerets on the underside of the tail on the female are delicate and thin, while the swimmerets on males are thick.

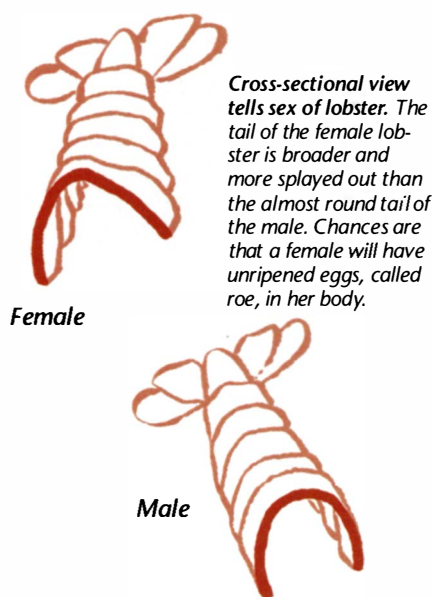
**Shedders**—Lobsters must shed their external skeletons in order to grow. The molt occurs during the summer months, triggered by changes in water temperature. New-shell lobsters, or shedders, have soft, papery shells that peel easily. Since vulnerable shedders tend to hide rather than graze, they have less meat than hard-shell lobsters of the same size. But the meat of shedders is exceptionally sweet and tender, and I prefer their flavor, though that's hardly a universal opinion here in Maine.

### Where they're from—

Most lobsters caught in the Gulf of Maine come from traps set within ten miles of

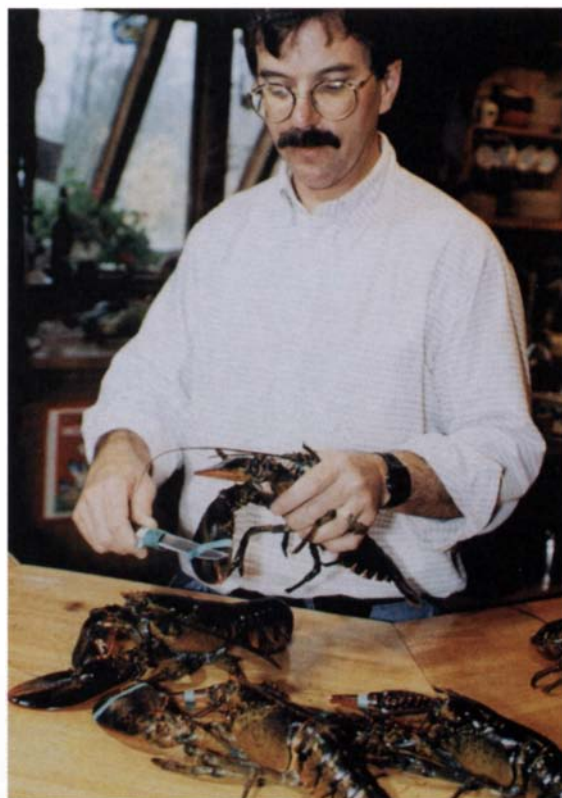
the coast. It seems strange to think of lobsters as farmed, but that's very nearly the case. It takes roughly seven years for a lobster to grow to legal size, which is also the age that females start to reproduce. Lobstermen are actually feeding the general lobster population because they haul the traps (baited with salted fish) every day or so and throw back the immature lobsters.

Lobsters taken offshore from deeper, cleaner, and colder waters have all the sweetness of any healthy lobster, but they also have a gentle smack of iodine. The tomalley from these bugs is salty and fishy in a thoroughly delightful way, and it flavors soups and sauces with clean lobster essence. I've tasted excep-



**Remove the bands to keep the flavor pure.**

The rubber bands that lobstermen put on the lobsters' claws can taint the cooking liquid and should be removed before cooking. Hayward holds the lobster securely by its body, slips a knife underneath the band and, pushing the band away from himself, snaps it off.



**This lobster isn't done.** Tug on a feeler to test for doneness. When the lobster is fully cooked, the feeler comes off easily. If the tougher connective tissue holding the feeler is cooked enough to separate, the meat inside is cooked, too.

tional lobsters from around the Isles of Shoals in southern Maine, and from Monhegan Island and other offshore locales near the broad mouth of Penobscot Bay. All different, all wonderful.

Unfortunately, the tomalley in some lobsters caught off the Maine Coast has been found to contain dioxin and other carcinogenic chemical residue. The Maine Department of Environmental Protection and two other state agencies recommend that lobster eaters limit their consumption of tomalley, and that women in their child-bearing years refrain altogether. No dioxins or other harmful compounds have been found in the lobster meat itself.

### COOKING LOBSTERS

There are many ways to cook lobster. For centuries along the Maine shore, lobsters have been piled in hot, stone-lined pits with sweet corn, potatoes, and clams and steamed in the oceanic vapor contributed by seaweed. On restaurant menus you'll see them boiled, baked-stuffed, poached, broiled, and grilled. I've even heard of microwaving them inside an oiled paper bag. While all these methods work, the three I prefer are steaming, poaching, and grilling.

**Simply steamed**—Steaming lobsters is the simplest method and better than boiling because you don't have to wait for gallons of water to come to a boil, and little of the lobster's flavor leaches out. You'll need a pot large enough to easily contain all the lobsters you plan to cook, and it should have a

tight-fitting lid. Add just one inch of water to the pot and bring it to a rapid boil. If you're near the ocean, try using sea water or adding some fresh seaweed to the pot.

Before adding the lobsters, rinse them briefly under cool running water and remove the elastic bands from their claws (see photo at left). The rubber can impart a slight aroma to the cooked lobsters. Put the lobsters in the pot on their backs. This quickens cooking a little, and the lobsters expire faster. Quickly cover the pot and turn up the heat to bring the water back to a boil.

Cook 1- to 1½-pound lobsters for seven minutes over high heat, timing from the moment the water returns to a boil. After seven minutes, turn off the heat and let the lobsters rest in the covered pot for a minute. If the lobsters are stacked more than three or four layers deep in the pot, cook the lobsters in the steam for ten to twelve minutes. Remove the lobsters from the pot with tongs and serve immediately. Larger lobsters will also require more time over boiling water. Two-pound lobsters need about ten minutes to cook through. To check if a lobster is done, take hold of one of the long feeler antennae, and give a slight pull. If it separates easily, the lobster is sufficiently cooked (see photo at far left).

**Poaching in flavor**—I like to poach lobsters because the gentle cooking produces meat that's both denser and tenderer than steamed meat. When poached in a court bouillon—a liquid flavored with herbs, vegetables, wine, and other savory ingredients—the lobsters absorb some of the flavor and aroma from the liquid. (Recipe on p. 52.)

Rinse the lobsters briefly under cool running water, remove the elastic bands, and put the lobsters in the boiling bouillon. If necessary, add water to completely cover the lobsters. Keep the flame high until the bouillon returns to a simmer, and then reduce the heat. A bare simmer is sufficient: at the perfect temperature, the bouillon will just tremble, not bubble. Poach the lobsters for twelve minutes, regulating the heat carefully. Turn off the burner, and allow the lobsters to repose in the bouillon for an additional two minutes. Remove the lobsters and cool them slightly before shelling.

To strengthen the bouillon, put the lobster shells back into the bouillon, return to a simmer, and cook fifteen minutes. Strain and reserve.

**Grilling**—I love the gentle smokiness that grilling gives to lobsters. Before grilling, partially poach or steam them for about five minutes, and then cool and shell them. Cut the meat into large pieces and marinate it briefly. I suggest a brightly flavored herb butter, or a freshly made pesto lightened with additional extra-virgin olive oil, or a marinade of rice-wine vinegar, slivered garlic, peanut oil, soy, and cilantro leaves. Lightly rub the outside of the shells



with a little vegetable oil to keep them from becoming brittle or scorched, and pile the meat back inside. Rake the fire in the grill to one side, place the upturned, filled lobster bodies on the far side of the grill, and put the cover on the grill. The lobsters are done as soon as the heat has penetrated to the center of the meat. Test by inserting a thin knife into the meat and touching the side of the blade to your lip or tongue. It should feel hot.

### SHELLING LOBSTERS

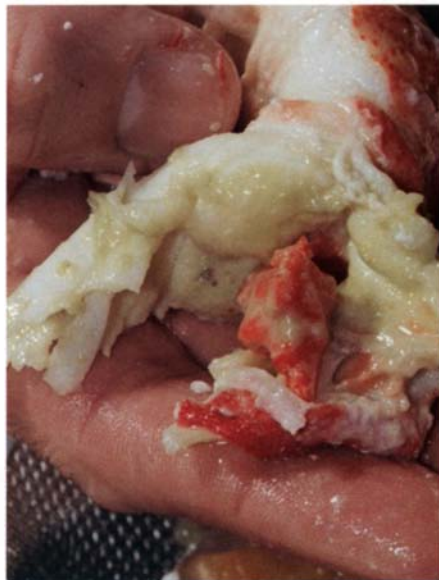
For purists, the only way to enjoy a lobster is to pick the meat from its shell after steaming or boiling and to dip it, morsel by morsel, into warm clarified butter. Not being a purist, I like to pick the entire lobster (or better, two) and put the meat directly into a bowl with a little butter, the tomalley, and the coral. The flavors intensify each other, and nothing is lost or wasted.

With a little experience, shelling lobsters becomes quick and efficient. If you're shelling lobster at the table, arm yourself with a lobster cracker and a cock-tail fork. If you're shelling lobster in the kitchen, set a strainer over a bowl to collect all the liquid and the tomalley and roe that flow from the shells.

**Major breaks**—First break the lobster into manageable pieces. Twist the tail off the body and break off the tail fins by bending them backward. Break off the claws at the body, and pull the body shell off the white body frame (see photo on p. 52).

**Tomalley**—Look into the body shell for the tomalley. Actually the hepatopancreas, an organ that combines some functions of both liver and pancreas, the tomalley bursts and liquefies when cooked. Tourists can be seen in any lobster house on the coast of Maine squeamishly confronting tomalley for the first time. But those who really appreciate lobsters know that this olive-green pâté is one of the most delectable parts of a lobster. Since I found out that the tomalley may contain minute amounts of dioxin, I stopped including the tomalley in dishes that I serve to the public, but I can't resist eating it myself every once in a while.

**Tail**—When it's cool enough to handle, place the



## Delicate roe

Female lobsters often have unripened eggs, called roe or coral, in their body cavities and tapering down into their tails. When raw (see top photo at left), the roe is a dark greenish-black color. When cooked, the eggs turn bright red (see bottom photo at left).

You can take advantage of the delicate lobster flavor of the roe in a variety of ways. Whisk raw roe with cream and add it to a soup or sauce. Whirl it with four times its volume of unsalted butter in a food processor to make a green lobster roe butter, which, when whisked into a simmering mixture of wine and bouillon, changes instantly into an orange-pink roe butter sauce. I have painted dinner plates with green roe butter, and slid one side of the plate under a broiler, turning that side of the plate pink and leaving the cooler side pale green.

Bright-red cooked roe has a grainy, waxy texture that looks and tastes lovely sprinkled delicately over chowders, soups, and warm or chilled lobster dishes. To separate the eggs, first crumble the cooked, cooled roe with a fork onto a baking sheet, and dry it in a moderate oven. Then rub the roe through a wire strainer to produce tiny red grains.—S.H.

curve of the tail in the curled palm of your hand, nestling the back of the shell between the heel of your hand and your fingers. Squeeze as if to make a fist. The membrane on the bottom of the shell will split. Now grasp the tail in both hands, and spread the tail shell outward and away from you, exposing the tail meat. Remove it in one piece.

Remove the intestinal tract by peeling back the thin, red strip of meat along the back of the tail, exposing the blackish intestine. Pull the intestine out intact, or rinse it out with a little water or bouillon. (I seldom bother to remove the digestive tract for myself, but generally do for other diners.)

Female lobsters may have roe inside the tail meat. The roe will be bright red if the lobster is cooked, and greenish-black if it is mostly raw. (For suggestions on what to do with the roe, see the sidebar above.)

**Legs**—Twist the eight small legs off the white body frame. If you're eating the lobster, suck the meat out of these as if pulling on a drinking straw, and by progressively squeezing the leg meat out with your front teeth. Somewhere along the line I learned another neat trick for getting the meat out of the small legs. After twisting the legs off the body



*The shells have flavor, too. Expose all flavor-bearing parts of the lobster by pulling the white body frame from the red outer shell (above). The shells simmer with tomatoes, aromatic vegetables, and brandy to infuse lobster flavor into the Lobster Coulis (left). See the recipe for this delicious, versatile sauce at right.*



frame, put them on a cutting board or the counter. Beginning at the pincer end of each leg, roll a sturdy wine bottle or a rolling pin over the leg, and the meat will squeeze out like toothpaste. I often float these beautiful strands of red lobster meat on the surface of lobster soups.

**Claws**—Twist the knuckles off the claws. Use a lobster cracker to crack across the claw at the point where the “thumb” is connected. Twist off the thumb by bending it straight backward. The thumb should leave its thin strand of meat behind, and will probably bring with it an oval of inedible cartilage. Now remove the claw meat in one piece. This is awesomely delicious meat. Pick up the knuckles and either push

the meat through the cylindrical shells with your little finger or crack them open with a lobster cracker.

**Body**—Next spread open the white body frame, and notice the small cartilage chambers along the inside of each half. Each of these chambers harbors a tiny morsel of pure white meat, worth the trouble of extraction to real aficionados. Use a toothpick or cocktail fork for the task.

**Liquids and shells**—At this point, though you’ve removed all the meat, the roe, and the tomalley, the lobster still has more flavor to give. If you poached the lobster, the court bouillon is gently flavored with lobster and can be used in sauces or soups. The shells can be simmered with court bouillon to give it a more concentrated flavor, and they can also be used to make a great lobster coulis—a thin tomato purée (see the recipe at right). The liquids released from the body cavity during shelling can be used to strengthen the lobster flavor of almost any dish.

**A final use for shells**—Remember the story about lobster being plentiful enough to plow into fields as fertilizer? Now that we have come full circle, getting full use from just about everything the lobster can yield, the lobster achieves its final destiny in the compost pile. If you don’t have a problem with raccoons or neighborhood dogs, this is a great way to activate a sleepy compost pile. The temperature of mine soars almost instantly when it gets a dose of lobster shells.

## LOBSTER COURT BOUILLON

*Enough to poach four lobsters at a time.*

4 cloves garlic, chopped coarse  
1 cup sliced celery ribs  
1 cup sliced carrot  
1 medium leek (white and green parts), split, washed, and chopped coarse  
1 cup sliced white or yellow onion  
1 large sprig of parsley  
6 bay leaves  
10 to 12 branches thyme  
1 branch rosemary  
24 peppercorns, lightly cracked  
2 Tbs. white-wine vinegar  
4 cups dry white wine  
8 cups of water

Put all the ingredients in a large pot, bring to a boil, and simmer for 5 min. For tips on poaching lobsters, see p. 50.

## LOBSTER CAKES WITH BASIL AND LOBSTER COULIS

These delicate lobster cakes look and taste wonderful served with fresh basil on a pool of lobster coulis. If you don’t have time to make the coulis, serve the lobster cakes with mustard and fresh tarragon, or with a soft, homemade mayonnaise mixed with capers and parsley or chives. *Serves four as a main course, up to twelve as an appetizer.*

### THE LOBSTER CAKES:

4 live lobsters, 1 to 1½ lb. each  
1 medium shallot, minced fine  
1 egg white  
½ tsp. salt (preferably sea salt)



#### **Cayenne pepper**

**2 Tbs. Armagnac or other brandy**

**¼ cup heavy cream**

**½ cup basil leaves sliced in thin chiffonade, plus whole perfect leaves for decoration**

**2 Tbs. clarified unsalted butter**

Have ready a bath of ice and water in a sink or large container. Kill the lobsters by immersing them in a pot of rapidly boiling water for 2 min. Submerge them in the ice water and chill completely.

Shell the lobster tails, claws, and knuckles. Force the meat from the lobster legs by rolling a wine bottle or rolling pin over them. Reserve the bodies and shells. Put the tail meat of two of the lobsters into the work bowl of a food processor with the shallot, egg white, salt, and a pinch of cayenne. Process until very smooth. Add the Armagnac. While processing, add the cream in a steady stream, pausing occasionally to scrape down the work bowl. Dice the remaining tail, claw, and knuckle meat into ¼-in. pieces. In a large bowl, gently combine the diced lobster and the lobster mousse. Chill at least an hour, while you proceed with the lobster coulis (see below).

Reheat the finished lobster coulis. Add the sliced basil to the coulis.

Brush a nonstick skillet with a thin film of the butter and spoon the lobster mixture into the pan to make twelve cakes. (Do this in batches, if necessary.) Brown on both sides over high heat. Reduce the heat and continue cooking 4 min., or until the cakes resist a gentle press. At the last minute, add the lobster leg meat to the pan to warm. Divide the cakes among serving plates lined with lobster coulis. Arrange the leg meat over the cakes. Decorate with whole basil leaves.

#### **THE LOBSTER COULIS:**

**The body shells and white body frames of two lobsters**

**¼ cup olive oil**

**4 cloves garlic, chopped coarse**

**1 medium leek (white part only), split, washed, and chopped**

**½ cup sliced carrot**

**¼ cup chopped celery ribs**

**1 Tbs. fresh tarragon leaves**

**2 Tbs. chopped flat-leaf parsley leaves**

**1 tsp. chopped fresh thyme leaves**

**2 bay leaves**

**½ cup Armagnac or other brandy**

**1 cup dry white wine**

**2 lb. fresh plum tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and diced**

**Salt (preferably sea salt) and cayenne pepper**

For easy removal later, keep the shells of the lobster in large pieces, but separate the white body frames from the outer shells. Put the shells, the body frames, and the oil in a large, nonreactive pot or Dutch oven. Sauté 5 min. over medium heat, stirring frequently to avoid scorching. Add the garlic, vegetables (except the tomatoes), and herbs. Continue cooking until the carrots are tender, about 10 min. Add the Armagnac and wine. Simmer to reduce by half. Add the diced tomatoes and simmer 10 min. Remove the lobster shells and bodies with tongs or a slotted spoon, and continue to reduce the sauce until slightly thickened, about 10 min., over medium heat. (Tomatoes with high water content will require longer reduction time.) Cool slightly. Purée in a blender or food processor. Season with salt and a pinch of cayenne.

#### **LOBSTER CHOWDER**

I like to add interesting seafood along with the lobster to my chowder, such as steamed mussels, razor clams, tiny Maine shrimp, great Pemaquid oysters, or even a little sea-urchin roe. *Makes 12 cups.*



**4 to 6 lobsters, 1 lb. each**

**Lobster Court Bouillon (see recipe at left)**

**4 oz. smoky slab bacon, cut into ¼-in. dice**

**2 medium leeks (white parts only), split, washed and cut into ½-in. dice**

**2 lb. russet potatoes, peeled and cut into ½-in. dice**

**1 cup dry white wine**

**2 cups cream**

**4 ears fresh sweet corn, scraped (about 2½ cups)**

**Salt (preferably sea salt) and freshly milled black pepper**

Poach the lobsters in court bouillon, following the technique on p. 50. Cool and shell the lobsters, reserving the liquid released during shelling, as well as 2 cups of the court bouillon.

Fry the bacon in a soup pot without scorching. Pour off all but 2 Tbs. of the fat. Add the leeks and potatoes, and stir to coat with the bacon fat. Cook over medium heat for 5 min., stirring frequently, until the leeks are soft. Add the reserved court bouillon and the wine, bring to a boil, and simmer until the potatoes are nearly tender. Add the cream, bring to a boil, and reduce to a simmer. With a sturdy wire whisk or a potato masher, mash about half the potatoes into the liquid to thicken the chowder. Add the scraped sweet corn. Simmer 4 or 5 min., stirring to prevent sticking.

Cut the lobster tail meat into large dice, leaving the knuckles and claws whole. Add the lobster meat and ½ cup of the reserved juices to the chowder. I like to heat the lobster meat and juice in a skillet before adding them to the chowder so that proteins in the lobster don't make the chowder curdle. Add salt and pepper to taste.

*No starchy binder holds these lobster cakes together, just a mousse of raw lobster meat. Served with fresh basil and lobster coulis, the delicate cakes work equally well as an appetizer or as a main course.*

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*Sam Hayward is the executive chef at the Harraseeket Inn in Freeport, Maine. He calculates that in twenty years of cooking professionally on the coast of Maine, he has overseen the preparation of more than a hundred thousand lobsters. ♦*

# Beyond Plain Pork

Butterflying and stuffing with summer vegetables adds moistness, flavor, and eye-appeal to a boneless roast

BY HARTMUT HANDKE



***Simple but delicious.***

Juicy roast pork loin is studded with colorful vegetables. Roasted tomato sauce and puréed potatoes with shallots are terrific accompaniments.

***Searing improves flavor and keeps juices in.*** Before roasting, all sides of the roast should be evenly browned in a hot skillet with a little oil.





## STUFFED BONELESS PORK LOIN

Serves six to eight.

2 to 2½-pound boneless pork loin  
Salt and pepper to taste  
Fresh rosemary and thyme, chopped  
Oil

### FOR THE STUFFING:

1 pound mixed trimmed and cut vegetables (about 5 cups)

Choose from:

Small mushrooms, in quarters  
Red, yellow, and green peppers, in medium julienne  
Yellow squash, in half-rounds  
Zucchini, in half-rounds  
Carrots, in thin slices  
Eggplant, in peeled half-rounds  
Scallions, in 2-inch lengths

1 tablespoon chopped shallot  
1 teaspoon chopped garlic  
2 tablespoons chopped mixed fresh herbs—  
parsley, thyme, rosemary, and oregano  
Salt and pepper  
¼ cup olive oil



*These vegetables are ready for the stuffing. They've been seared for color and flavor, and then roasted until tender and fully cooked.*



*Rolling the stuffing in plastic makes it easy to shape. One end of the roll is tied securely, and then the other end is twisted until the stuffing is compressed into a perfect cylinder.*

When deciding whether I'm going to add a stuffing to a cut of meat, I ask myself, "Will a stuffing improve the flavor, the look, and—in my case as a restaurant chef—the sales value of the meat?" For boneless pork roast, the answer to those questions is "yes" all around. A stuffing adds moisture and flavor to the pork, which can be dry and bland on its own. Adding a stuffing transforms a plain piece of meat into a dish that is enticing to my customers and will be to your friends and family, too.

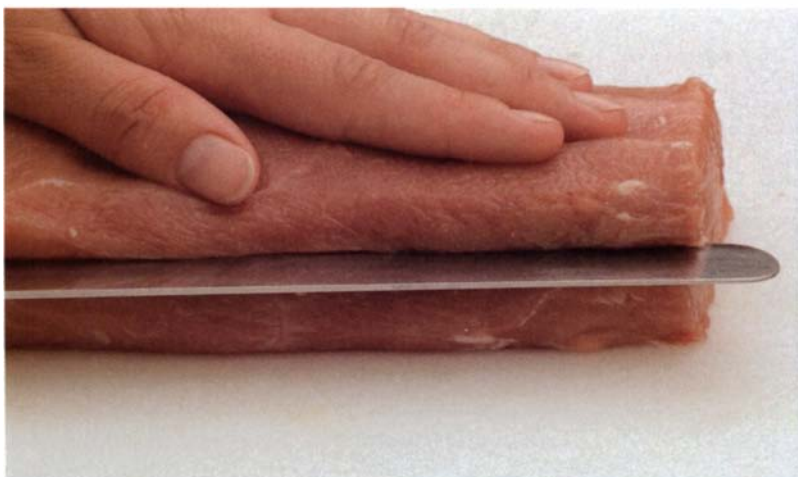
My stuffing is made with pan-seared vegetables loaded with fresh herbs and olive oil, so it's very moist, and colorful, too. To open and stuff the roast easily and efficiently, first I butterfly it and open it up like a book. I season the meat on the inside, add the stuffing, and then truss and roast the pork loin. When I carve the finished roast, I have perfectly shaped slices, with a beautiful mosaic of vibrant vegetables surrounded by an even band of meat.

### MY STUFFING MAKES ROASTING THE PORK EASY

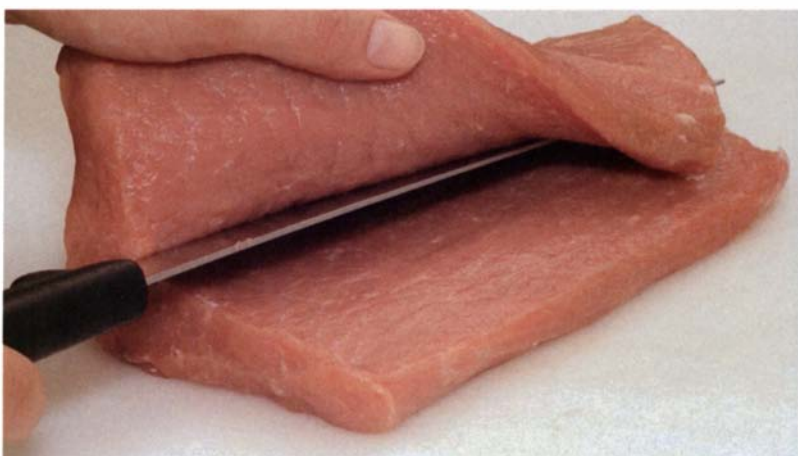
A big advantage of my stuffing is that it's completely cooked before it goes into the roast; this allows me to concentrate on cooking the roast to perfection, without worrying about whether the stuffing is correctly cooked at the same time. With old-style forcemeat or mousse stuffings (which contain raw meat, eggs, and cream), the cooking might be compromised—the roast a little overdone in order to adequately cook the stuffing. Here, I can cook the roast so the meat is pale pink and juicy. The fact that the vegetables are completely cooked also means that they won't change shape or give off juices during cooking, which could make the stuffing shrink or slide.

**The ingredients.** I use a variety of summery vegetables in the stuffing: eggplant, bell peppers, scallions, zucchini, yellow squash, carrots, and mushrooms (see ingredient list at left). I want to have 4 to 5 cups of chopped vegetables for a raw 2-pound roast. Along with the vegetables, I add about a tablespoon of chopped shallot, a teaspoon of chopped garlic, and 2 tablespoons of chopped mixed fresh herbs, like parsley, thyme, oregano, and rosemary. Almost any combination of vegetables and herbs will work, though I stay away from very wet vegetables, such as tomatoes, and from flavors that are very strong and don't pair easily, such as asparagus.

I cut the vegetables in varying sizes so that they'll all cook at the same rate. I leave the eggplant pretty chunky because it collapses a lot during cooking, while I cut carrots small because they're dense and slow-cooking. The overall size of the cuts, however, is pretty large. If I cut the vegetables into small dice,



*The right way to butterfly. The knife is level and the chef's hand is stretched flat, ready to sense any deviation in the cut.*



*The butterflied pork is opened like a book. Any uneven spots can be pounded out to give a perfect expanse of meat, ready to season and stuff.*

they would look great raw, but once cooked, the colors and shapes would blur together.

**The cooking method.** I mix all the vegetables, shallot, garlic, herbs, and salt and pepper together with about 3 tablespoons of olive oil and leave them to marinate about 30 minutes at room temperature. I cook the stuffing in two steps—first, pan-searing on top of the stove and, second, finishing in the oven. To pan-sear, I heat another tablespoon of olive oil in a very hot skillet. I add the vegetables and cook them over high heat for 2 to 3 minutes, stirring or shaking the pan constantly so they don't burn. This method caramelizes the vegetables, giving them a nice color and, more importantly, developing a deeper flavor. Next, I spread out the sautéed vegetables on a sheet pan and finish cooking them in a hot oven, about 400°F, for another 5 to 10 minutes, just until they're tender. To keep things simple at home, you could finish cooking them in the frying pan on top of the stove if you pay careful attention.

Use low heat, and if the vegetables seem to be browning too much or drying out, add a little water or stock. Certain vegetables, such as carrots and onions, have a lot of sugar in them and can burn easily. To avoid this, you could cut these sugary ingredients thinner and add them last.

**Shaping the stuffing.** After I cook the stuffing, I let it cool, and then wrap it up in plastic wrap to form a cylinder, which I then freeze. This method gives me stuffing in a solid shape, which is very easy to handle when filling and trussing the meat because the stuffing stays securely in the center of the roast, and bits of vegetables don't fall out of the ends. It also means that I can prepare my stuffing way ahead of time, and in large quantities, so it's ready to pull out of the freezer whenever needed. This method is standard efficiency for a professional kitchen, but it would also be a help when entertaining or even when cooking this roast for a midweek meal.

To make the cylinder, which should be about 1½ inches in diameter, I lay a double thickness of plastic wrap on the counter. I spoon the cooled stuffing down the center in a line about as long as my pork loin, and then fold over one side of the plastic and shape the stuffing into a loose log. I roll the log completely in the plastic wrap, and then I twist one end to close, tying with a piece of string to secure it. I twist the other end until the whole log gets nice and tight (see the photo on p. 55) and tie that end tightly.

#### **BUTTERFLY TO OPEN, TRUSS TO CLOSE**

To butterfly the roast, first I trim off the fat. Personally, I like fat on pork, but we're going a little leaner at the restaurant in response to customer requests, so I trim the pork completely. You can leave as much or as little fat as you like; the rest of the preparation and cooking is the same, whether the meat is trimmed or not.

The boneless pork loin is shaped like a slightly flattened cylinder. To butterfly it, I make one straight cut along one long edge, cutting almost through to the other long side. My goal is to get the piece of pork so it's all one thickness. I just gauge the thickness of the meat, divide that measurement by two, and stop my cut that distance from the edge of the meat. For example, if the pork is 2 inches thick, when I cut through the middle, I'll create two sides that are each an inch thick. Therefore, I'll bring the knife through the meat to within an inch of the back side. When I open out the butterflied meat, the whole piece will be an inch thick.

This cutting technique is pretty easy. I make sure that the whole edge of the knife blade is in contact with the meat (as shown in the top photo at left), so that I can check that I'm starting out straight. I apply a little pressure on the top of the meat with





*Frozen solid and easy to use. The frozen stuffing stays put, so the meat can be neatly wrapped around it.*

my stretched-out hand to secure the meat and to help me keep the cut level. I try not to saw back and forth too much, but rather to make one continuous pulling stroke toward me. Of course, I use a very sharp knife to do this right.

When I've cut far enough, I open up the meat like a book (see the bottom photo at left) and lay it flat. If I see any uneven spots, I put the meat between two pieces of plastic wrap and gently pound them out.

**Adding the vegetable stuffing.** When the meat is uniformly thick, I season it with some salt and pepper, unwrap the frozen stuffing, and place it in the center of the meat. I wrap the meat around the stuffing (as shown in the photo above) and butt the two long edges together in a neat seam, which neither overlaps nor gaps. I actually do want to have a little extra meat at this seam for slack, however, because as the roast cooks, the meat will shrink slightly. By just pushing and easing some more meat at the seam edge, I'm giving enough allowance for shrinkage so that when the roast is cooked, the meat will form a perfectly flush seam and the finished slice will look great.

With this kind of stuffing, I don't need to worry about closing up the ends of the roast. Because it's frozen, it won't fall out during trussing and searing.

Now I truss the meat in order to keep the stuffing securely in the center of the roast, and also to help the roast keep a nice straight shape during cooking. For detailed instructions on trussing, see Basics.

## **A TWO-STEP ROASTING METHOD**

To give the meat a little more flavor, I like to roll it in some more chopped herbs and, of course, season it with salt and pepper. Rosemary and thyme are nice because they have strong flavors and are tough herbs. Herbs like parsley are too fragile and

delicately flavored to withstand the searing and roasting process.

**The initial searing.** Any meat should be seared on top of the stove before it goes in the oven. Searing does two things—it closes the pores of the meat so that all the juice doesn't run out during roasting, and it caramelizes the outside of the meat, giving it a nice color and flavor. Some recipes will tell you to sear the roast by placing it in a very hot oven for the first few minutes, then turning the oven heat down, but I don't believe that this method is effective—you won't get true caramelization of the meat juices.

To sear the pork, I heat a little more oil in a skillet, add the roast, and cook over medium-high heat until browned, turning it so all sides are evenly colored. I'm not trying to cook the pork here, I'm just coloring the outside layer of meat. Searing done, I transfer the meat to a rack in a roasting pan and leave it in the refrigerator until I'm ready to roast. I always like to roast meat and poultry on a rack, not directly on the roasting pan, so the heat can circulate freely around the roast. Also, I avoid getting an overcooked crusty area where the meat touches the pan.

**Roasting and serving.** I roast the pork in a 375°F oven for 15 to 20 minutes to the pound. When the pork is cooked, the internal temperature should read around 150° on a meat thermometer for pink, juicy meat. The temperature will increase slightly once the roast is out of the oven, so you can remove the roast when the thermometer reads about 145°. I make sure to embed the thermometer in the meat and not in the stuffing.

I always let any roasted meat or poultry rest out of the oven, but in a warm place, for about 15 minutes before carving and serving. This lets the juices redistribute throughout the flesh, making the meat tenderer and juicier.

At my restaurant, I like to serve this pork roast with a roasted tomato sauce, but for serving at a family meal, the roast really doesn't need pairing with a sauce. The substantial vegetable stuffing supplies plenty of flavor and color. I like to serve this with a bottle of Côtes du Rhône. The big flavors of the wine work great with the Mediterranean feel of the vegetable and herb stuffing.

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*Hartmut Handke is one of the 50 chefs certified as a Master Chef (CMC) by the American Culinary Federation, and he has won dozens of medals in worldwide culinary competitions. He was Executive Chef at The Greenbrier, a five-star resort in West Virginia, and in 1991 he moved to Columbus, Ohio, to open his own restaurant, Handke's Cuisine. ♦*

# Savoring Some Sweets of the Vine

As an aperitif or after-dinner treat, these sweet muscat wines make a good meal great

BY ROBERT FEINN

**T**he difference between a very good dinner and a really great one can hinge on a small glass. A pour of sweet wine before, during, or after dessert is a touch, all too often overlooked, that can extend the camaraderie and enhance the pleasure of a dinner party. The sweet wines produced from varieties of the muscat grape are an especially welcome addition to a meal. But you needn't wait for dessert to enjoy these delicious muscat wines. They are appropriate as aperitifs and to accompany first courses, and they're altogether proper served as a midafternoon refresher.

Muscat wines are produced in many countries, including France, Italy, Spain, Greece, Hungary, and the United States, where varied growing conditions, grape varieties, and vinification methods make for many distinctive styles of wine. I've selected just two of these wines to discuss—one French and one Italian—because the dramatic contrast in their styles shows how interesting and varied muscat wines can be. But before talking about these two kinds of muscat, a quick discussion about sweet wines in general will be useful.

## WHAT MAKES SWEET WINES SWEET

Sweet wines are sweet for a several reasons. The grapes that are used to make them have a high sugar content to begin with. Then, those grapes are harvested when their sugar levels are at their peak; for the wines described here, that's late in the season. After harvesting, the grapes are pressed to extract their juice, which is then put into refrigerated stainless-steel fermentation tanks. Cold fermentation in stainless helps keep a pronounced, fresh muscat flavor in the wine. Fermentation results from a controlled bacterial activity. The microorganisms metabolize the natural sugars in the juice and dutifully transform it into alcohol and other, less evocative, byproducts. By letting fermentation run its course, you get a dry wine because most of the sugar has been digested by the



Photos: Susan Howard

*The color is the key to the character of these two wines made from the muscat grape. The gold, almost amber color of Muscat de Beaumes de Venise (left) accurately indicates the wine's honey-like sweetness and slightly viscous feel. The pale straw color of Moscato d'Asti (right) corresponds to its fruity, quaffable taste and barely sparkling texture.*



bacteria. Conversely, stop the fermentation early, and you get a sweet wine because not all the sugar has been made into alcohol. In some wines, the grapes are so sweet to start with that the yeasts stop working before a significant portion of the sugar is consumed.

Some sweet wines, like Moscato d'Asti, are very low in alcohol and have a fresh, lively flavor. Others, like Muscat de Beaumes de Venise or the more well known Sauternes, are rich, viscous, and honeylike. The range in price is equally varied, from inexpensive to very costly.

As a rule of thumb, the lighter sweet wines are best served to complement, rather than contrast, the food they accompany. Because they're light in character, they go equally well with restrained, not-so-savory appetizers as aperitifs and with light, not-so-sweet, not-so-rich desserts. On the other hand, the richer, more viscous sweet wines make a more profound statement, and so can keep company with tastier, richer appetizers like foie gras. But a word of caution: most sweet wines just don't go well with intensely sweet, drop-dead desserts. That's because the sweetness of the dessert overwhelms the wine, leaving it tasting flat and insipid.

#### ONE GRAPE, TWO GREAT WINES

The first muscat wine I'll discuss is Muscat de Beaumes de Venise from France, with a rich, resonant character. The other is from Italy—Moscato d'Asti. It's light, refreshing, and fun loving.

**Muscat de Beaumes de Venise**—This Rhône Valley wine is a favorite of mine. Produced in Beaumes de Venise (near Avignon in southern France) from the grape variety *muscat à petits grains*, this wine is fairly heavy and very perfumed, primarily with the scent of muscat grapes, but with overtones of peaches and apricots. Fermentation is stopped early by adding brandy to the wine. This practice is called fortifying the wine. The flavor of the muscat grape is kept alive, but the wine is much richer than the Italian Moscato d'Asti because it has a higher alcohol content due to the addition of the brandy. The alcohol is about 15 percent, which is low compared to other fortified wines like Port or Madeira, but twice that of the Moscato d'Asti. In France, where sweet wines are often served before the meal, Beaumes de Venise is usually served as an aperitif. (Indeed, France is the world's number-one importer of Port, and typically they drink it not as a dessert wine, but as an aperitif.) In the United States, we tend to use Muscat de Beaumes de Venise mostly as a dessert wine (and the same with Port). It's all a matter of custom.

But custom aside, Muscat de Beaumes de Venise is exceptionally delightful with a first course of pâté or a slice of terrine. Not only can the Muscat stand up to these savory, high-fat dishes, but also it loses

*Perfect partners for dessert. The honeyed flavor and texture of Muscat de Beaumes de Venise gains more complexity when paired with salty blue cheese and ripe, sweet pears.*





*Serve light flavors with light, fruity Moscato d'Asti. Not-too-sweet cookies or pastries won't overwhelm the delicate spritz quality of this wine.*

some of its sweetness to them, and so develops a drier, more interesting flavor.

At the end of the meal, Muscat de Beaumes de Venise is best with blue-veined cheeses and ripe fruit, especially pears. The sweetness of the fruit and the sharp saltiness of the cheese seem to make the wine more complex. Muscat is also appropriate with tangier sweet desserts like an apple tart, or with slightly sweet, mellow flavors like those in a toasted hazelnut cake.

Most Beaumes de Venise comes from the wine cooperative, the communal wine-making operation where local farmers take their grapes. In France, and occasionally here, it is found in an ornate, flask-like bottle with a screw cap. Beaumes de Venise in a screw-cap bottle is generally not the finest quality. Most of what comes to the United States, however, is in a conventional, cork-finished bottle, sometimes Burgundy-shaped (slope-shouldered) bottle or in a tall, slender Alsace-style bottle. Several wine *négociants* (large bottlers and shippers) sell good-quality

Muscat de Beaumes de Venise in America, including the “king of beaujolais” Georges Duboeuf, Paul Jaboulet Aîné, and Chapoutier. The best, however, come from individual estates. These wines are intensely flavored, yet well balanced. At least two estate wines are commonly available in the United States: Domaine de Coyeux and Domaine Durban. The prices range from the high teens for the *négociant* wines to the twenties for the estates; half bottles are available at slightly more than half the price of fulls.

Unlike many other wines, Beaumes de Venise does not tend to pick up complexity with age, and the muscat flavor can become less distinct after several years, so drink your Beaumes de Venise soon after you buy it to enjoy it at its peak.

**Moscato d'Asti**—From Piedmont in northwest Italy, Moscato d'Asti is a delightful, frothy, light wine made from the *moscato bianco* grape, the Italian version of *muscat à petits grains*. Moscato d'Asti should not be confused with Asti Spumante, though both are from the same region and both are made from muscat grapes. Asti Spumante is a sparkling wine, often excellent in its own right, but it doesn't capture the natural fruit like a good Moscato d'Asti. When making Moscato d'Asti, the fermentation is stopped early, thus preserving the fresh, perfumey grape flavors and keeping the alcohol low, about 7 percent. Moscato d'Asti has a *frizzante* quality, a natural spritz, which causes a minor explosion on the palate, and which also enhances the muscat taste. Its lively, mouthwatering character stimulates the appetite, so this wine is often served before dinner as an aperitif. It's also perfect as a light, refreshing, midafternoon beverage.

At the end of a meal, Moscato d'Asti is best served with simple, light desserts because the wine itself is light in body, fragrant, and fruity, and not cloyingly sweet. Simple pastries, nutty cookies, and fresh fruit or fruit-based desserts are delicious with the light but vivacious Moscato. This wine should be drunk young, not more than three years from the vintage date. The cost is about \$12 to \$16 a bottle. Many winemakers from the Piedmont are now producing Moscato, and more of their production is becoming available in the United States. Names to look for include Ceretto, Rivetti, Casinetta, and Zardetto. If your local wine merchant doesn't stock a Moscato, he should be able to order one for you.

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*Robert Feinn co-owns Mt. Carmel Wine & Spirits Co. in Hamden, Connecticut, with his brother Benjamin. The wine shop has been a family business since the repeal of prohibition. Feinn's interest in wine comes from both sides of his family. His mother's people owned the wine shop, while his father, a produce broker, shipped wine grapes from California every fall and sold them to local Italian families, who produced their own wines. ♦*



*Smoking fish at home is easy, and the results are moist, succulent, and tasty. Jay Harlow home-smokes fish three different ways. This butterflied rainbow trout was smoked in a wok on top of the stove. Rice, tea leaves, and brown sugar provided the smoke and a soy and ginger marinade added even more flavor.*



# Smoking Fish at Home

Three simple methods for kitchen or yard

BY JAY HARLOW

Smoking transforms the flavor and texture of fresh fish in a most felicitous way. While traditional methods of smoking result in very dry, very salty forms that can survive for months at room temperature, today's smoked-fish products are moister, less salty, and more perishable, although they still last longer than fresh fish.

I'll describe three smoking techniques suitable for home cooks. One requires an inexpensive specialized smoking pan; the other two use a covered kettle barbecue and a Chinese wok. All three techniques use hot-smoking (in the 200°F range). During hot-smoking, the temperature of the fish generally rises to at least 140°, at which stage the protein

coagulates to the firm consistency and opaque look that defines cooked fish.

Fish smoking relies on the basic processes of curing and drying. Both inhibit spoilage by reducing the moisture in the fish that bacteria need. The curing stage uses salt (and sometimes sugar) to soak flavor into the fish and draw out excess moisture. The art of fish smoking lies in controlling the heat and the curing process.

## CHOOSING THE FISH

Any fish can be smoked, but a higher fat content helps the fish stay moist, and a richer taste balances the smoke flavor best. Salmon, trout, char, and whitefish

are my favorites. Other good choices include tuna, mackerel, bluefish, mullet, herring, sablefish (sometimes called black cod and butterfish), and sturgeon.

Smaller fish can be smoked whole, but larger fish should be cut into manageable pieces. The best cuts are those that expose a lot of the fish surface to the smoke: whole small fillets, butterflied or kited fish (two boneless fillets attached by the skin), or steaks or fillet cuts from larger fish. Don't remove the skin because it helps hold the meat together. Also, the fat lying between the skin and the meat supplies flavor and moisture.

## CURING THE FISH

Most recipes call for a preliminary cure with salt, or sometimes a blend of salt and sugar. Some recipes call for two stages of brining, the first with straight salt, the second with sugar, spices, or other flavorings added. Use only pure salt (kosher or pickling salt); other salts may contain additives that will alter the flavor. Sugar has the same water-drawing effect and is often used to reduce the amount of salt in the finished product. Add 10 percent sugar for a rounder, mellower taste. A 50/50 mixture will result in a definitely sweet cure. Experiment with proportions to suit your taste. Depending on the type of fish and the smoking method you use, curing can take as little as 10 minutes or as long 24 hours.

The simplest method of curing is to sprinkle the salt directly on the fish. Allow two teaspoons total salt and sugar per pound of boneless fish. Lay fillets skin side down in a shallow, nonreactive pan (glass, stainless steel, or enamel), combine the sugar and salt, and sprinkle it all over the fish. Apply a heavier layer on the thickest part of the fillet; use a little less on the thinner tail and belly.

Larger pieces of fish, such as a tuna loin (see the center photo at right), are easier to cure in a brine. As a rule of thumb, use two tablespoons total salt and sugar per cup of water. A gallon-size locking plastic storage bag is handy for curing smaller pieces with a minimum of brine. Put the fish in the bag, measure in cold water to surround the fish, and then add the required salt or sugar. Expel the air, seal the bag, turn and shake it to dissolve the salt, and refrigerate.

After either dry-salting or brining, soak the fish for 15 minutes in water or at least rinse it to remove excess salt from the surface. If time permits, air-dry the fish 15 minutes or more in a cool, breezy place before smoking. The outer surface of the fish will dry into a thin skin (pellicle), which gives an especially nice appearance to the finished fish and helps slow down the loss of moisture as it smokes.

## SMOKING MATERIALS

Hickory, alder, oak, maple, and fruitwoods such as apple, pear, and cherry are all good choices for



**Curing the fish is the first step.** Dry-cure fillets with a sprinkling of salt or a mixture of salt and sugar. Use a heavier hand applying the cure to thicker areas of the fillet, and go lighter on the thinner belly flap and tail section.



**An easy, mess-free way to brine large pieces of fish like the albacore loin at left, is in a one-gallon locking storage bag.** Mix the brine right in the bag with the fish, and then put the whole bag in the refrigerator.



**Developing a "skin" retards drying.** Once the cured fish has been rinsed and patted dry, fifteen minutes in a cool, breezy place is all it takes to give the fish a thin "skin" which slows down moisture loss during smoking.

smoking. Mesquite has its partisans, although I think it's more valuable as charcoal than as smoking wood. Each wood imparts a slightly different fragrance; experiment with the ones available to you and see which you prefer. Some smokers are designed for a very coarse sawdust, others for chips. Prunings from fruit trees and even finely split firewood will work in a charcoal grill or other live-fire setup. To get the maximum amount of smoke, soak



chips or prunings in water before adding them to the fire.

The smoker itself can be anything from a small covered pan to specialized smokers and homemade rigs. Before you start scouring the junkyards for an oil drum or an old refrigerator, try one of the fol-

lowing techniques, which uses standard or readily available cooking equipment.

### BARBECUE SMOKING

A covered kettle barbecue is ideal for smoking larger pieces of fish. The heat source is a small charcoal fire, with hardwood chips or fruitwood cuttings for smoke. The key to this technique is controlling the temperature by regulating the top and bottom vents. With a little practice, you can get a fire that smolders at around 200° for close to an hour, long enough to smoke a good-sized salmon fillet. Dangle an instant-reading thermometer through the top vent to monitor the temperature.

Fillet the fish, leaving the skin on. Remove the pin bones (small bones running down the center of the fillet) with tweezers or needle-nose pliers. Dry-salt with three parts salt and one part sugar; cover and refrigerate eight hours or overnight.

An hour before you begin smoking, drain off the juices that have collected around the fish. Cover with cold water, let stand 15 minutes, drain, and repeat. Then pat dry. For a smoother surface, lay the fillets on a wire rack in a cool, breezy place for 15 minutes to dry.

While the fish is soaking, start a small charcoal fire (about a dozen briquettes) at one edge of the kettle and let it burn down until coated with gray ash. Meanwhile, soak ½ cup of wood chips in water. Set the top and bottom vents of the barbecue about 90 percent closed. Drain the chips and add them to the coals. Set the grill in place and lay the fish on the grill on the side opposite the fire, with the thickest part nearest the heat. Cover and cook until the fish is opaque, 30 to 40 minutes, adjusting the vents to maintain the temperature at 180° to 200°. Add some dry wood chips to the fire after 15 minutes. To test for doneness, carefully bend the fillet to open the flakes and look into the center; the fish should be turning from translucent to opaque. Let the fish cool, wrap it, and chill before serving.



### Safety tips

- Remember that smoking does not preserve fish indefinitely; it's still perishable and needs refrigeration. Freeze if storing longer than a week.
- Some fish are hosts to parasites that can affect humans. Thorough cooking or long, deep freezing destroys these parasites. During cleaning, inspect the fish for pin-sized worms. If any are present, or just to be safe, cook until the meat is opaque in the center.
- Know the source of your fish, especially if it's sport-caught. Check with your state or local health authorities to see if there are any warnings on fish from local waters. Buy commercial fish only from reputable dealers.
- Use only wood products specifically packaged for smoking food; some commercial lumber is treated with toxic preservatives, like chromated copper arsenate. Prunings from unsprayed fruit trees are fine, but remove the bark if the tree has been sprayed.—J.H.

### STOVETOP SMOKER BOX

If you smoke small to moderate amounts of fish, consider a single-purpose smoker than can work with a gas or electric range, or even a camp stove. One is the Cameron Smoker Cooker, by C.M. International (see Sources at right). The Cameron is basically a stainless-steel rectangular pan with a sliding cover, a drip pan, and a rack. This unit can accommodate a couple of medium-sized trout, several fish steaks, a center cut of salmon, or a two-pound albacore loin. The special coarse wood dust it uses smolders from the indirect heat of a burner under the pan. The following recipe will also work in other self-contained home smokers, like the Little Chief model (see Sources at right).

Brine up to two pounds of fish in a straight salt brine for 20 minutes. Drain, rinse with a couple of changes of fresh water, and then brine a second time with half salt and half brown sugar plus a tablespoon or so of mixed pickling spices. Let stand 20 minutes, drain, and let dry on a rack for at least 15 minutes.

Prepare the smoker according to the maker's directions. In the Cameron smoker, this means spreading about two tablespoons of wood dust in the bottom of the pan, and then placing the drip pan and rack on top. Lay the fish on the rack, cover the pan, and cook over medium heat until the fish registers 140° on an instant-reading thermometer, 12 to 18 minutes depending on thickness.

### STOVETOP SMOKING IN A WOK

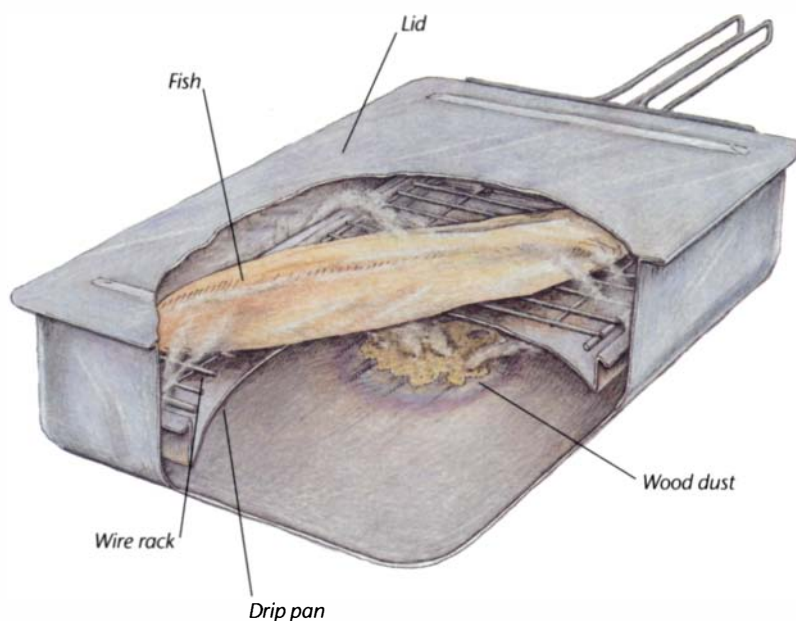
Perhaps the easiest smoking method of all is Chinese-style, in a wok. With the same setup used to produce the famous smoked tea duck, you can marinate and cook a couple of fillets, steaks, or small whole fish in less than an hour from start to finish. Instead of wood, however, the smoke source is a mixture of equal parts raw rice, brown sugar, and tea leaves. The salting stage is also simpler, replaced by a marinade of soy sauce, ginger, and scallion. Because relatively little salt is involved, just think of this as a flavorful way of cooking fish for immediate consumption.

You'll need a wok 14 inches in diameter or larger

with a tight-fitting lid, and a wire cake rack that will fit inside under the lid.

Place the fish (a butterflied trout, a couple of skin-on fillets, or a few steaks) in a shallow bowl. Sprinkle with a tablespoon or two of soy sauce and a large pinch of sugar, and add a few slices of ginger and a scallion cut into 1-inch lengths, both crushed with the side of a broad knife. Marinate 10 to 20 minutes, turning occasionally.

Line the inside of the wok and the lid with large sheets of heavy-duty foil. Let the excess drape over the rim. Combine  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup each rice, tea leaves (black or oolong), and brown sugar and spread the mixture in a 6-inch circle in the middle of the wok. Put the wire rack in place and turn the heat to high. When the sugar begins to smolder, drain the fish, wiping off the excess marinade, and put it on the rack. Put the lid on the wok and crimp the two layers of foil together to hold in the smoke. Reduce the heat to medium high



STOVETOP SMOKER BOX

## Serving hot-smoked fish

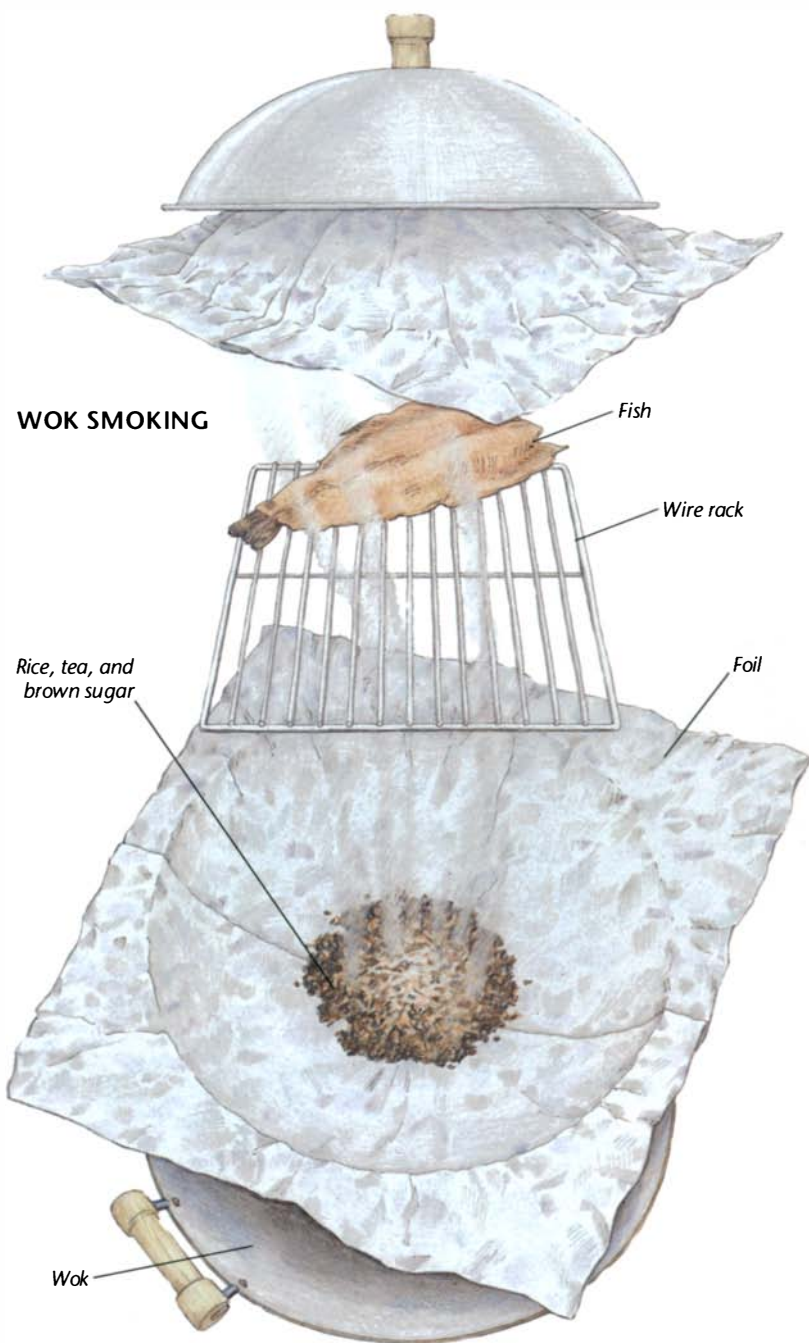
- Smoked fish can be served hot from the smoker as an appetizer or main dish, but as most varieties are on the salty side, a little can go a long way. Try it in smaller quantities as an accent in potato salad and other salads. For a delicious pasta sauce, add small pieces of smoked fish at the last minute to a mixture of corn kernels, scallions, and cream. Or stir some into a risotto with fresh peas just long enough to reheat the fish.

- A little smoked fish added to cream cheese is a classic spread for bagels and other breads. Or reverse the proportions, using a little cream cheese or butter to bind mashed smoked fish in a terrine.

- Don't expect to slice hot-smoked fish the way you can lox; the smoked fish will crumble if cut too thin. Cubes, chunks, or thick slices are easier to handle. Or flake it apart.—J.H.



## WOK SMOKING



and cook 10 minutes for thin fillets or butterflied fish, 12 minutes for thick steaks. Some smoke will leak out, so use the exhaust fan if you have one.

When the smoking time is up, turn off the heat and turn the fan to its highest setting. (If you don't have an exhaust fan, you may want to open the wok near an open window or door, or carry it outside. Even so, the amount of smoke produced isn't enough to set off a smoke alarm or perfume your clothing.) Carefully unfold the foil (don't tear it, in case you have to cook the fish longer) and re-



*Wok smoking is the easiest and fastest method. Harlow smokes soy-marinated trout in a lidded, foil-lined wok. Equal parts rice, brown sugar, and tea leaves provide the aromatic smoke.*

move the lid. Test the fish for doneness by probing with a skewer in the thickest part; the skewer should penetrate evenly and easily. Wrap the foil up around the smoking mixture, set aside to cool, and discard. Serve the fish hot, with rice and a simple vegetable.

Once you get the hang of the wok smoking technique, you can add whole spices such as star anise, Sichuan peppercorns, and cassia or cinnamon bark to the basic smoking mix. Or skip the rice mixture entirely and use wood chips (the smallest kind available) or dust.

The dry heat of smoking is hard on the finish of the wok. If you use the same wok for stir-frying, oil it well after smoking. If you find you like this method, you may want to dedicate one wok to smoking.

### SOURCES

For the closest source of the Cameron Smoker Cooker and the wood dust it uses, contact the manufacturer, C.M. International, 2527 Weston Rd., Colorado Springs, CO 80910; 719/390-0505. The Cameron model is also available from International Home Cooking, 854 Tiffany Blvd., Rocky Mount, NC 27804; 800/237-7423.

The Little Chief is sold at many sporting goods stores. For the store nearest you, contact the manufacturer, Luhr Jensen, Inc., PO Box 297, Hood River, OR 97031; 800/535-1711. Luhr Jensen also sells a variety of wood dusts for its smoker.

*Jay Harlow is a former restaurant chef, a seafood columnist for the San Francisco Chronicle, and the author of nine cookbooks. He smokes fish at home in California's Bay Area. ♦*

# More than Strawberry Shortcakes

How to make a great shortcake and adapt it to your taste

BY SHANNON MCKINNEY

**M**y partner and I own and operate a country restaurant and bakery, and we've noticed that more and more of our customers are looking for fresh, homey desserts like shortcakes. I love to create new desserts, so when I saw how popular our mixed-berry shortcake was, I decided to experiment with different fruit and filling combinations. Although strawberry is the classic partner for shortcakes, many fruits can be paired with the basic biscuit. No matter what fruit you use, the textures and tastes derived from the combination of fleshy fruit, crisp shortcake, and velvety whipped cream is nothing short of gastronomic bliss.

One thing I learned in my training as a pastry chef is that it's important to learn the basics first. So I'll begin with the basics, by telling you exactly how to make a perfect berry shortcake. From there, you'll be able to make my variations, and you can go on to create your own new shortcake desserts.

## WHAT ARE SHORTCAKES?

Shortcakes are small, tender, sweetened biscuits. They are usually flat and round, ranging in diameter from 1 to 4 inches for individual servings. Some shortcakes are larger and cut into pieces like a pie. While most shortcakes are round, there's no reason not to cut yours into stars, moons, triangles, dogs, cats, or whatever you like. The term "short" refers to the crumbly, melt-in-your-mouth texture that is the hallmark of this dessert. Shortness is achieved by working the fat into the flour until the fat is in small granules, which makes a tender, coarse-grained crumb. Shortcakes should be light, airy, just barely brown, and delicious enough to eat on their own.

Basic shortcake biscuits consist of flour, fat, leavening agent, liquid, and flavoring. All-purpose flour works fine, but a low-gluten cake or pastry flour will work better, yielding a more tender short-

*Crisp, tender biscuit, juicy berries, and rich whipped cream make the quintessential shortcake. The biscuit gets its characteristic "short" texture from the bits of fat mixed with the dry ingredients. This is different from a "flaky" texture, which comes from larger pieces of fat that, when rolled out, form leaves or flakes of pastry.*







## MAKING SHORTCAKE DOUGH

*Rub the shortening and flour between your fingertips to blend them to the right consistency. Keep working until the mixture looks like very coarse meal.*

*Your hand is the best utensil for mixing the dough just right. Stop as soon as the flour is moistened and the ingredients form a loose dough.*

*Your dough will be rough, but that's how it should be. Don't be tempted to work it until smooth; gentle handling produces a tender biscuit.*

cake. Fat types are also interchangeable; you can choose butter, margarine, vegetable shortening, even lard. Fats with higher melting points, such as vegetable shortening, will give shortcakes a lighter consistency. If you want a buttery flavor, you can always spread on some butter after baking. No matter which fat you choose, chill it until it's firm before using, so that your finished dough will be cool, firm, and easier to roll out.

The biscuits are leavened by baking powder, which, in the presence of moisture and heat, gives off carbon dioxide gas. There's really no other leavening agent appropriate for shortcakes.

The right liquid is more a matter of personal preference than of chemistry, and you can choose between milk or water. Whole milk, two-percent milk, or buttermilk will give the shortcakes a finer texture, better food value, and a richer flavor. Water, however, will also give satisfactory results. Chill the liquid before making your dough.

Salt and sugar are always added to shortcake dough, but there are many wonderful optional additions, such as vanilla extract, grated citrus zest, cinnamon, chocolate chips, candied ginger, pecans, almonds, cocoa, coconut, poppy seeds, or raisins.

## MAKING AND BAKING THE BISCUIT DOUGH

Here's the basic procedure for making any shortcake dough. Combine the flour, sugar, salt, and baking powder in a bowl, stir a little to mix these ingredients, and then add the fat. Incorporate the fat into the flour mixture by taking a big pinch of the ingredients and rubbing your fingertips together lightly. Work like this until only very small lumps of fat remain, nothing larger than a small pea. Stir in any dry flavorings such as citrus zest or nuts at this point. Add the chilled liquid and mix with your hand just until the flour is completely moistened and the in-

gredients form a loose dough. Don't overmix, or you'll get a tough shortcake.

Pat out the dough onto a floured surface and roll it out until it's about  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch thick. Cut the dough into the desired shapes, using a biscuit cutter or a sharp knife; dip the cutter or knife into some flour between each cut to prevent the dough from sticking. Reroll any scraps and cut again. Only do this once, though, because the dough gets tough if you handle it a lot.

Arrange the shortcakes about an inch apart on a parchment-lined sheet pan and bake them in a preheated oven. As for baking temperatures and times, no two ovens bake exactly the same, so these factors will vary. Aim for very lightly colored biscuits that have just about doubled in height. A little experimentation might be necessary to get the perfect conditions, but 400°F for 15 to 20 minutes is a good place to start. If you use a convection oven (which is what we use at the bakery), the temperature will be slightly lower and the time slightly less.

Some shortcake recipes call for brushing the raw dough with an egg wash or milk, dusting it with granulated sugar before baking, or a combination of these. This is to promote caramelization, which gives the shortcakes a deeper color and a crispier surface. In our recipes, the tops of the biscuits really don't show, so this step isn't necessary. When the shortcakes are baked, remove them from the oven, peel them off the parchment, and let them cool on a rack.

Ideally, you should use the fresh shortcakes the day they're baked. However, you may wrap them tightly in plastic film and store them in the refrigerator for up to a week. Just reheat the biscuits lightly in the oven before serving. You can also cover and freeze the cut, unbaked biscuits, and bake them as needed. Don't defrost them; just take them directly



*Stamp out your biscuits economically, so you get a minimum of scraps. You can reroll scraps once, but after that the dough will get too tough.*

## BASIC SHORTCAKE BISCUITS

*Makes 8 biscuits cut with a 3-inch round cutter.*

**12 ounces (2 $\frac{2}{3}$  cups) all-purpose flour**  
**2 tablespoons sugar**  
**1 teaspoon salt**  
**1 tablespoon plus 2 teaspoons baking powder**  
**4 ounces ( $\frac{2}{3}$  cup) vegetable shortening, chilled**  
**1 cup buttermilk, chilled**  
**2 teaspoons vanilla extract**



*Shortcake goes Hawaiian with fresh pineapple and roasted macadamia nuts, all bathed in sweet, amber caramel.*



*Spike fresh oranges with a splash of Grand Marnier for a sophisticated shortcake. A few shavings of bitter chocolate add contrasting color and flavor.*

### **BASIC BERRY FILLING**

*Enough for 8 biscuits.*

**1 cup strawberries**  
**1 cup blackberries**  
**1 cup raspberries**  
**¼ cup sugar, or to taste**

### **BASIC WHIPPED CREAM**

*Enough for 8 biscuits.*

**2 cups heavy cream**  
**¼ cup sugar, or to taste**  
**1 tablespoon vanilla extract**

from the freezer to the oven, but reduce the heat slightly and let them cook a few minutes longer.

### **NOT JUST STRAWBERRIES**

Before you decide what filling to make, find out what fruit is ripe and in season. Whether you buy wholesale or shop at the local market, use your senses to judge the freshest ingredients. Fresh, ripe fruit will not only look good, it will smell delicious, too.

The fruit for shortcakes, no matter what type, needs only simple preparation. Peel the fruit, if necessary, and slice it into small pieces (pick out any seeds). Put it in a bowl and sprinkle with a few spoonfuls of sugar. (Don't use an aluminum bowl because the metal could react with the acid in the fruit.) Toss it lightly just to mix, then cover the bowl and let it sit for about an hour at room temperature. The sugar will draw the natural juices out of the fruit, making a tasty liquid for moistening the shortcake biscuits. Taste your fruit mixture; if it's a little flat, add a tablespoon or two of fresh lemon juice for a flavor pick-me-up. When using delicate fruit such as raspberries or blackberries, reserve some of the whole berries before mixing with sugar for garnishing the final presentation.

A simple mix of fruit and sugar is the classic filling for shortcakes, but you can have fun and be creative by adding a splash of liqueur such as Triple Sec, Grand Marnier, Framboise, Kirschwasser, or any good cognac.

### **MAKING PERFECT WHIPPED CREAM**

Whipping heavy cream is a simple process, but following these tips will give you better whipped cream every time. When shopping for cream, try to find one that is pasteurized, but not ultrapasteurized. Ultrapasteurization (a process that kills bacteria and

extends shelf life) brings cream to a high heat level that actually breaks down the molecules of fat in the product. These fat molecules are necessary for good whipped cream because they trap air and liquid during the whipping process, giving the cream the fluffy volume it needs. A pasteurized-only cream will whip faster and keep its shape and volume longer.

Always chill your utensils before whipping cream. Start with a clean, cold, stainless-steel, glass, or ceramic bowl (not aluminum, which can react with the whisk and give a gray tinge to the cream, nor plastic, which won't really hold the cold). Add the cream, and whip quickly with a wire whisk until the cream is slightly thickened. Now add the sugar and any flavorings. Continue to whip until the cream forms soft peaks. Don't whip beyond the soft-peak stage, because the cream will get stiff and curdled. Cover the bowl and refrigerate the cream until you're ready to assemble the shortcakes. Whipped cream made with good-quality cream should last for 24 hours.

### **PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER**

The finished shortcakes should be made to order as you need them. Assembling the desserts ahead of time and refrigerating will make the biscuits too firm. Also, room temperature fruit is much more flavorful than cold fruit.

Split the biscuits by pulling them apart, and place the bottom of the biscuit on the serving plate. Gently spoon the fruit and juice mixture onto the biscuit and top with a small amount of whipped cream. Put the remaining biscuit half on top of the fruit and spoon more fruit and juice on top. Add another dollop of whipped cream and garnish with some whole berries or chunks of fruit. Serve immediately, and, above all, enjoy.





*Mellow white chocolate and tart, juicy cherries contrast deliciously. Because the mousse is rich and creamy, there's no need to serve them shortcake with whipped cream.*

### **ORANGE AND GRAND MARNIER SHORTCAKES**

*Enough for 8 biscuits.*

**2 tsp. grated orange zest**  
**5 oranges, peeled and sectioned (see Basics), with their juice,**  
**soaked in 1/3 cup Grand Marnier liqueur, and sprinkled**  
**with 1/4 cup light brown sugar**  
**Grated bitter chocolate**

Add the orange zest to the basic biscuit dough. Assemble the shortcakes as directed and sprinkle with the bitter chocolate.

### **PINEAPPLE, CARAMEL, AND ROASTED MACADAMIA NUT SHORTCAKES**

*Enough for 8 biscuits.*

**2 1/4 cups sugar**  
**1 cup heavy cream**  
**2/3 cup macadamia nuts, salted or unsalted**  
**1/2 beaten egg white**  
**1 tsp. sugar**  
**1 large fresh pineapple, peeled, cored, cut in 1/2-in. pieces,**  
**and sprinkled with 1/4 cup sugar**

**Make a caramel sauce**—Put 2 1/4 cups sugar in a large, heavy pan and heat, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon, until the sugar is melted (there will be lumps). Keep stirring until all the lumps disappear and the sugar is a medium-dark amber. Remove from the heat and carefully stir in 1/4 cup heavy cream. (The caramel will spatter, so stand back.) Add the rest of the cream and stir until completely smooth. Keep warm until ready to serve; store extra caramel sauce in the refrigerator for up to a month.

**Glaze and roast the macadamia nuts**—Stir the nuts, egg white, and 1 tsp. sugar until combined. Spread the

nuts on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper or foil and bake 13 to 15 min. in a 325°F oven. Cool completely. Assemble the shortcakes as directed, topping with the caramel sauce and macadamia nuts.

### **CHERRY AND WHITE-CHOCOLATE MOUSSE SHORTCAKES**

*Enough for 8 biscuits.*

**2 cups heavy cream**  
**8 oz. white chocolate, finely chopped**  
**12 oz. (2 cups) pitted fresh cherries, soaked in 1/4 cup dark**  
**rum, and sprinkled with 1/4 cup sugar**

**Make a white chocolate mousse**—Start the mousse 8 to 24 hours before serving. Bring 2/3 cup heavy cream to a boil. Remove from the heat and add the white chocolate. Stir until completely melted. Transfer to a medium bowl and let cool until tepid. Put the rest of the cream in a chilled bowl and whip until soft peaks form. With a rubber spatula, gently but quickly fold the whipped cream into the white chocolate mixture until just combined. Cover and refrigerate at least 8 hours. Assemble the shortcakes as directed, piping the mousse around the top and bottom cakes.

---

*Shannon McKinney graduated from the Culinary Institute of America in 1984, and then apprenticed for two years with world-renowned pastry chef Albert Kumin. In 1986, he and partner Brian Doyle opened their bakery, McKinney & Doyle Fine Foods, in Pawling, New York, where he applies his classical pastry training to a full range of all-American desserts. ♦*

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In this department, experts present foundation recipes, define culinary terms, and describe basic preparation and cooking techniques. Readers are invited to send us pieces on their best methods of work.

## Peeling and Segmenting Citrus Fruit



Individual segments of citrus fruit that have had all the covering membranes removed make beautiful and delicious additions to both sweet and savory dishes. The French term for these peeled segments is *suprêmes*, and the technique used to cut them is called *peeling à vif* (ah VEEF), or peeling to the quick.

To peel and segment any citrus fruit, first cut away both ends of the fruit just down to the flesh. Set the fruit on the work surface and, with a sharp knife, cut away the skin, working in wide bands from top to bottom. Cut all the way through the skin and the underlying



white pith, but try not to cut into the flesh itself (see photos at left).

Pick up the peeled fruit, hold it over a bowl to catch the juices while you work, and begin cutting away each segment from the membrane. Slide the knife blade between the membrane and the flesh of one side of a segment, and then slide it on the other side of the segment, cutting the segment free (see photo above). Remove the segment with your knife and set it aside. Continue with the next segment, and keep working your way around the fruit, folding back the empty membranes like the pages of a book. When you've removed all the segments of flesh, squeeze the membrane to remove any remaining juice. Store the peeled segments in the juice until you're ready to use them, or use the juice for something else and store the segments wrapped in plastic.

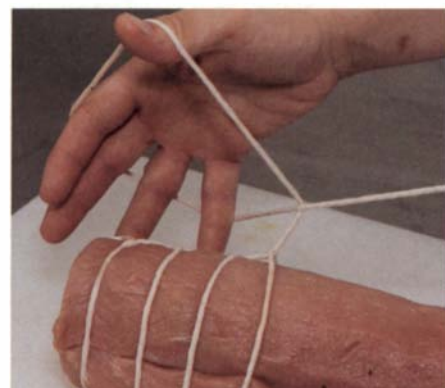
—Gary A. Coley, private chef, Atlanta, Georgia

## Trussing a Roast

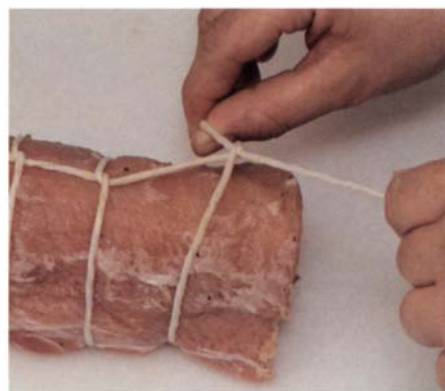
Any long, slim roast, whether stuffed or unstuffed, can benefit by being trussed before roasting. Meat has a natural tendency to twist and curl as the different fibers in the meat shrink during cooking. Trussing helps to keep the meat straight, so that the shape remains perfect. I use standard butcher's twine, which is pretty thick, but any kitchen twine will do. I don't pull the twine too tightly or it will bite into the meat, creating a rippled effect. But I don't leave it loose,

either, because as the meat shrinks a little, the twine will lose its grip.

To truss, I put the roast in front of me, with one short end toward me. I take a long piece of twine (about ten times longer than the roast) and tie one end of the twine around the far end of the roast (I leave a few inches of twine at the end of the knot for the final tying). As a right-hander, I hold the length of the twine in my left hand, about four inches from the meat. With my right hand, I make a loop, which I slip over the far end of the meat and gently pull about an inch past the first loop. The roast will now be bound in two places—my original tie and now this loop. I continue un-



til the roast is completely trussed, spacing the loops about an inch apart (see photo above). As I go, I tug gently on the twine to snug up the loops and to align the knots (see photo below).



When I reach the end of the roast, I flip it over and bring the twine up the length of the meat, slipping the twine through each loop of string to catch and secure it. At the top, I tie the two loose ends together and trim off any excess string. Now I'm ready to roast.

—Hartmut Handke, CMC, chef and owner of Handke's Cuisine in Columbus, Ohio ♦



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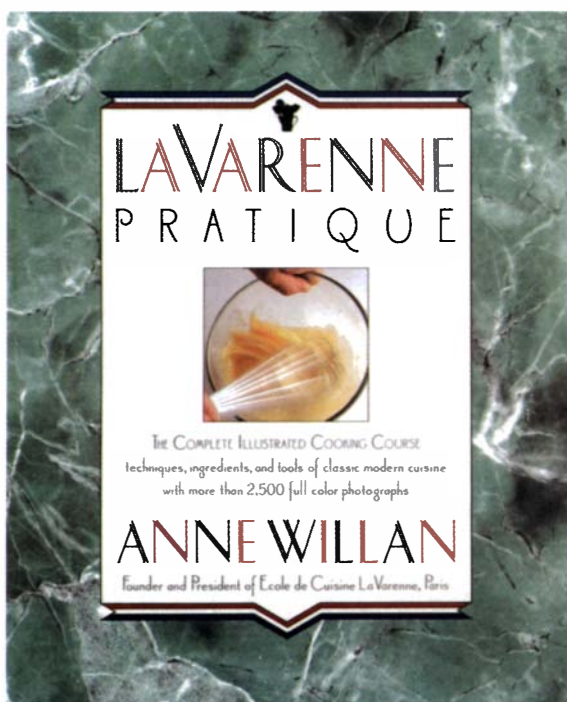
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# How-To-Cook Books



Everyone who cooks, or who wants to cook, needs a reliable resource in the kitchen—a single-volume reference to take the terror out of cooking, to increase the comfort level when working with food, and to make cooking more fun. One of the following books may be that resource for you.

***La Varenne Pratique*, by Anne Willan.** CROWN BOOKS, 1989. \$60, HARDCOVER; 528 PP. ISBN 0-517-57383-0.

If you're looking for one reference to help you achieve competence in the kitchen, then this "illustrated cooking course" is it. Winner of the 1989 IACP/Seagram Award for Best General and Basic Cookbook, *La Varenne Pratique* offers extensive guidelines for identifying, choosing, and storing ingredients; techniques for preparing and cooking food; serving tips; and recipes. All this is done with a series of well-crafted, step-by-step photographs of ingredients and techniques.

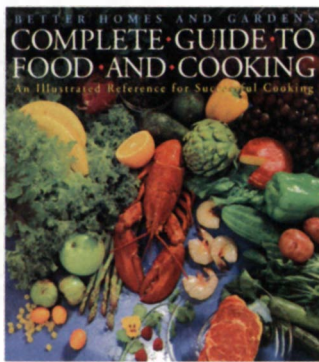
Each chapter begins with a broad overview. For example, "Pastry & Cookies" starts with a statement on basic pastry ingredients, techniques for making pastry by hand or by machine, chilling, storing, rolling, and filling pies. The chapter continues with clear, detailed de-

scriptions of various types of doughs, complemented with stunning color photographs of making, shaping, and cooking various pastries.

Most of the ingredients discussed in the book are linked with a "Useful Information" box, which supplies detailed background and technical data. For instance, under crayfish, you will find common names, availability, how to choose, nutritive value, cooking methods, determining doneness, storage, and typical dishes. In general, recipes illustrate each technique and range from simple to complex.

One of the choicest aspects of the book is the section on meat cuts, which shows the large carcass divisions and smaller retail cuts for beef, veal, lamb, and pork. Another valuable illustrated section is the crystal-clear photo series on checking stages of sugar syrup.

While *La Varenne Pratique* is slightly scholarly, its information is easy to find and easy to read. The book is well worth its price.



***Better Homes and Gardens Complete Guide to Food and Cooking*.** MEREDITH BOOKS, 1991. \$29.95, HARDCOVER; 480 PP. ISBN 0-696-01911-6.

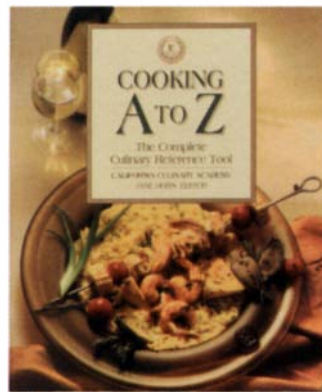
*La Varenne Pratique* is worth every penny, but at half the price, *Better Homes and Gardens Complete Guide to Food and Cooking* is a thorough, practical reference. It offers sound information on buying and storing ingredients, food preparation, cooking terms, tips, techniques, and recipe variations. While the book is arranged alphabetically like a glossary, the entries are quite extensive. Cross-references are given, but it isn't necessary to jump from entry to entry to grasp a topic.

A two-page schematic called "What's In This Book" guides you through the book's main features, such as solutions to common cooking problems, how-to photos, nutritional information, charts, definitions, tips, quantity yields and conversions, and cross-references. At the back, you'll find "Emergency Substitutions," and recipe and text indexes.

A look at the "Fish" entry reveals information on species, selection, storing, cooking, and retail cuts. While there are no pictures, a comprehensive chart lists types of fish, flesh color, flavor, and species substitutions. Likewise, cooking methods are presented in a streamlined chart for both fresh and frozen fish.

Want to tackle cooking kohlrabi? Five pages of clear, well-organized charts divide "Cooking Fresh Vegetables" into the vegetable, quantity, preparation, and directions for conventional and microwave cooking. Many entries include handy tips, such as "Plum Math," which divides pounds of plums into numbers of pieces of whole fruit, as well as cup measurements for chopped and sliced plums.

The *Complete Guide* is easy to use and informative—definitely a good resource to have on the kitchen shelf.



***Cooking A to Z*, by the California Culinary Academy.** THE COLE GROUP, 1992. \$24.95, SOFTCOVER; 631 PP. ISBN 1-56426-002-X.

Billed as a practical, comprehensive culinary reference, *Cooking A to Z* delivers some good information—if you're willing to hunt for it. The book includes guidelines for choosing ingredients and equipment, cooking terms, techniques, recipes, variations, and tips. The book is



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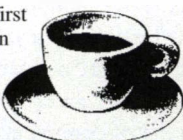
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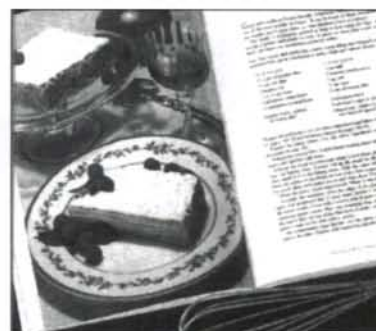
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organized alphabetically, so much of the information is easy to locate. But when you look under "P" for pastry, which would seem to be a logical entry, there's no such entry. A peek at the index lists "Pastry," then sends you stumbling through a maze of single-subject entries—"Cream Puffs," "Pie," "Puff Pastry," "Tart," "Techniques," and "Tools."

Similarly, "Vegetables" provides availability, selection, and preparation information all in one location, but then dispatches you to individual entries of "Blanch," "Boil," "Braise," "Broil," "Grill," "Microwave Oven," "Parboil," "Purée," "Steam," and "Stir-Fry." In addition, the book neglects to tell you there's additional data under individual vegetable entries, such as "Carrots" and "Fennel."

Many of the tips scattered through the book are extremely valuable. For example, the one discussing the doneness of meat is clear, concise, and realistic. In general, information on cooking equipment is one of the book's strongest assets, including a fine section on knives and

knife-sharpening methods. Cutting techniques are illustrated by a brief series of photographs.

More photos—and more close-ups—would make the book more effective for the novice cook. And while the book is brimming with recipes, the space would have been better used for more reference data and step-by-step instructions. *Cooking A to Z* is a good reference, but a frustrating one.

**A Food Lover's Tiptionary**, by Sharon Tyler Herbst. MORROW, 1994. \$15, SOFTCOVER; 373 PP. ISBN 0-688-12146-2.

Unlike the preceding books, *Tiptionary* is not illustrated, nor does it feature recipes. It is, however, a masterful tool bursting with cooking tidbits. Written by Sharon Tyler Herbst, "Good Morning America's" culinary "tipster" and the award-winning author of six books, *Tiptionary* offers information on selection, cooking, storage, problem-solving techniques, serving suggestions, and historical notes.

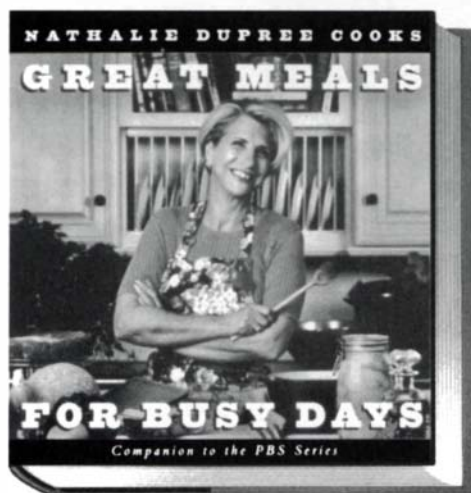
The book is arranged alphabetically, with entries bold-faced for quick finding. In addition to pronunciations of unusual words and useful cross-references, the book features handy charts with information from volumes for common pan sizes to common food additives to stages of hardness for sugar syrups.

Technical tips include how to cook at high altitudes, how to keep the fizz in sparkling wine, and how to cleanly split a cake layer using dental floss.

Whether you're a novice or an experienced cook in quest of kitchen savvy, I wholeheartedly recommend *Tiptionary*. Written in Herbst's clear and engaging style, the book is a sensible and satisfying reference.

—Leslie Beal Bloom is the Past President of the International Association of Culinary Professionals, a freelance writer for The Washington Post and Simply Seafood magazine, and a consultant for the seafood industry. Summers find her kayaking in the chilly but bountiful Arctic waters in search of exotic seafood. ♦

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### ARKANSAS

Festival—38th Annual Bradley County Pink Tomato Festival, June 9–11, Warren. Call 501/226-5225.

### CALIFORNIA

Auction—14th Annual Napa Valley Wine Auction, June 9–12, Meadowood Resort Hotel, St. Helena. For information, call 800/358-5476, ext. 526.

Seminars—Changing American Appetites: Mediterranean Inspirations, American Interpretations, June 20–25, Hyatt Regency San Francisco. For information, call Oldways Preservation & Exchange Trust, 617/695-9102.

Festival—Gilroy Garlic Festival, July 29–31, Gilroy. For information, call 408/842-1625.

Convention—American Culinary Federation National Convention, July 30 through August 3, San Francisco Hilton & Towers. Call 904/824-4468.

### COLORADO

Classes—School of Natural Cookery, PO Box 19466, Boulder, CO 80308-2466; 303/444-8068. July 15–17: A Cooking Weekend with Joanne Saltzman. Explore vegetarian cuisine at a Rocky Mountain retreat.

### FLORIDA

Fair—9th Annual Southwest Florida Wine Fair, June 4–5, South Seas Plantation, Captiva Island. For information, call 800/237-3102.

### HAWAII

Demonstrations—5th Annual Cuisines of the Sun, July 23–27, Mauna Lani Bay Hotel, Big Island. For information, call 800/367-2323.

### LOUISIANA

Festival—3rd Annual New Orleans Wine and Food Experience, July 14–17. Call 504/522-5730.

### MICHIGAN

Festival—National Cherry Festival, July 2–9, Traverse City. For information, call 616/947-4230.

### NEVADA

Festival—31st National Basque Festival, July 1–3, Elko City Park. For information, call 702/738-7135.

### NEW YORK

Workshops—Cornell's Adult University, 626 Thurston Ave., Ithaca, NY 14850; 607/255-6260. July 10–16: The Culinary Workshop on Wines, Breads, Grains, and Cheese.

### OREGON

Classes—Western Culinary Institute, 1316 S.W. 13th Ave., Portland, OR 97201; 800/666-0312. Weekend Continuing Education courses June through August.

### PENNSYLVANIA

Festival—Great Tastes of Pennsylvania: 4th Annual Wine and Food Festival, June 25–26, Resort at Split Rock, Lake Harmony. Call 800/255-7625.

### TEXAS

Festival—Black-Eyed Pea Jamboree, July 15–17, Athens. For information, call 903/675-5181.

### VIRGINIA

Festival—13th Annual Virginia Wineries Festival, June 4–5, Great Meadow Field Events Center, The Plains. Call 800/277-CORK.

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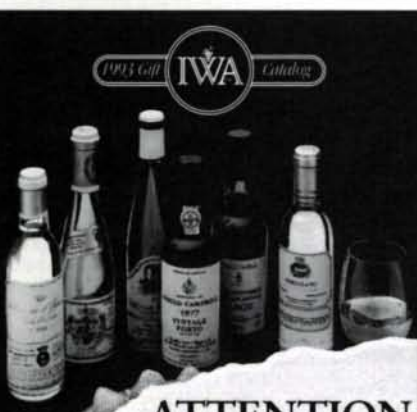
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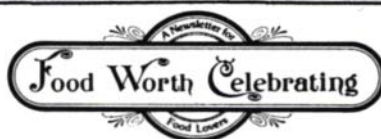
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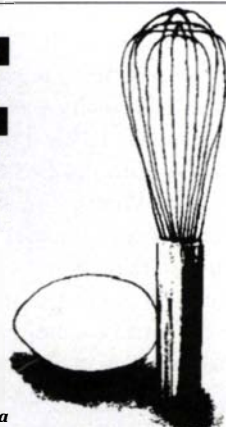
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# Worcestershire Sauce

Worcestershire sauce is a dark-brown, spicy-tangy elixir that has a long and murky history. Some theories say the “original” Worcestershire (pronounced WOOS-ter-sheer) came from ancient Rome. Supposedly, Worcestershire descended from the Romans’ *garum*, a popular condiment in which rotted fish was a primary ingredient.

According to legend, however, the sauce’s discovery was a happy accident. In the early 1830s, Lord Marcus Sandys walked into the Lea & Perrins chemist shop in Worcester, England, and requested that a sauce be made from a recipe he’d received in India. The chemists made the sauce and found it tasted terrible. They put the sauce in jars and left them in the cellar, where the sauce was forgotten for several years. When the jars were rediscovered, some brave soul sampled the contents. The aged concoction was delicious. Lea & Perrins began bottling and selling the creation soon thereafter, and the exact recipe remains its closely guarded secret.

Worcestershire maintains its popularity with a flavor that’s difficult to duplicate. Its unique taste—simultaneously sweet, salty, and savory—comes from a long-aged and unusual combination of vinegar, molasses, tamarind (a tart fruit native to India), shallots, garlic, cloves, onions, chili peppers, and anchovies.

However Worcestershire works its alchemy, it’s effective. People seem to use it in and on everything. It brightens the flavor of hearty soups and stews, has become a near-standard addition to meatloaf and hamburgers, and it’s vital to the creation of Caesar salad and steak tartare.

My dad, who inspired me to be a chef, loved Worcestershire. He was a novice cook who liked to recreate dishes he had eaten in restaurants while entertaining clients. Since we lived near the coast, seafood was a common highlight, and a bottle of Worcestershire was always nearby. I remember how careful he was to add just the right touch of Worcestershire to cocktail sauce for raw oysters. He always



*Worcestershire sauce is packed with lots of ingredients, including chili peppers, molasses, tamarind, onions, shallots, vinegar, garlic, and anchovies.*

went a little overboard when he used it in New Orleans-style barbecue shrimp.

It wasn’t until many years later, when a friend and I decided to open a chop house, that I ever considered making a near-scratch version of Worcestershire. I thought the flavor of Worcestershire was too unique to fully recreate, but I wanted to enhance it using many of the ingredients that create the mysterious blend.

After a good deal of trial and error, I think the final result satisfies my goal. In my kitchen, this sauce is inspiration; my chefs and I find ourselves creating more and more dishes in which to use it. Some customers like to pour it on prime beef, but my most popular menu item is an appetizer of warm, grilled, Worcestershire-drizzled portobello mushrooms.

Here’s my recipe for enhanced Worcestershire. The only ingredient that may be difficult to find is fresh horseradish, but it’s often available in the specialty section of produce departments. Make sure you choose the firmest possible horseradish.

## CHAMBERLAIN’S ENHANCED WORCESTERSHIRE SAUCE

*Yields 4 cups.*

- 3 oz. fresh horseradish, peeled and chopped rough (about  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup)
- 1 large onion (about  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb.), chopped
- 1 tsp. olive oil
- 1 tsp. seeded and chopped jalapeño
- 3 Tbs. roughly chopped garlic
- $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. black pepper
- 1 oz. anchovies (about  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup)
- Pinch ground cloves
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. salt
- 1 Tbs. lemon juice
- 1 cup water
- 1 cup Worcestershire sauce
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup molasses
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup honey
- 1 cup white-wine vinegar

In a large stockpot, sauté the horseradish and onion in the olive oil over medium-high heat for 4 to 6 min., or until the ingredients begin to caramelize. (If you have a hood over your stove, you may want to turn on the fan to disperse the horseradish fumes.) Add the remaining ingredients and simmer for 1 to  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours, or until the flavors meld. Strain and cool the sauce. The enhanced Worcestershire sauce keeps well in the refrigerator for at least 6 months.

Richard Chamberlain uses 20 gallons of his Worcestershire sauce each week at his restaurant, Chamberlain’s Prime Chop House, in Dallas, Texas. ♦



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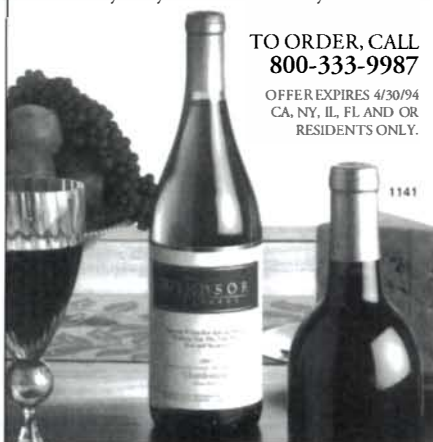
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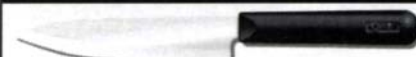
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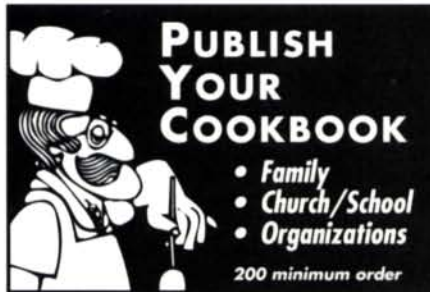
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## ADVERTISER INDEX

Action Inc. 75, 83  
AGA Cookers 7  
All-Clad Metalcrafters 7  
Alos 5  
America State By State 8  
American Spoon Foods 17  
Antq. Mall, Crown Rest. 18  
Arden's Gardens 84  
Armeno Coffee 82  
Ariu Coffee 84  
Beer Across America 18  
Bee Skep Herbarry 83  
Benson's Seasonings 79  
Bertolli 14, 15  
Blue Crab Bay Co. 83  
Borden 19  
California Winemakers 7  
Cambridge Culinary 78  
Cant. Crack & Peel 70  
Chefwear 9  
Chesapeake Bay 83  
Chesapeake Express 82  
Clarkson N. Potter 76  
Classic Steak 81  
CompuChef Inc. 71  
Cooking With Class 75  
Covington Ranch Beef 78  
Culinary Inst. LA 18  
Daylight Ent. 83  
Deb-El Foods Corp. 77  
Deinhard Wines 87  
Direct Wines 71  
Don Alfonso Foods 71  
Duhnke Furniture 82  
El Rancho Prod. 83  
Fabulous Feasts 83  
Farmington Filberts 83  
Filippo Berio 73  
Five-Star Espresso 75  
Flash in the Pan 70  
Floura Wild Rice 83  
Food Worth Celeb. 79  
GemServ Pub. 82  
Georgetown Coffee 84  
Gourmet Club 84  
Great Plains Meats 82  
Great SW Spice 81  
Heartymix 84  
Hendrix Farms 78  
Herb 'N' Lore 82  
Hilyard & Hilquist 17  
Indps. Cul. Inst. 70

Int'l Home Cooking 70  
Int'l Wine Acc. 78  
Int'l Ck. Sch. Ital. Fd. 71  
Island Traders 85  
Jabea House 82  
Josey B. Choc. 84  
Karen Ware 71  
Kitchen Kapers 18, 76  
Lamson & Goodnow 8  
Lifetime Career Sch. 82  
Lion House Ckbs. 85  
Lynn Koning 82  
Magnolia Prod. 83  
Maharaja Spice 83  
Mail Order Gour. 79  
Mangia Sftwre 77  
Melissa's By Mail 84  
MJ Gourmet 82  
Morris Press 85  
Mrs. Dog's 82  
Nancy's Spec. 70  
Nat'l Dairy Bd. 2  
Nat'l Pork Prod. 11  
New England Cul. 81  
Nuts D'Vine 83  
Old World Coffee Trad. 85  
Peter Kump's N.Y. Sch. 17  
Piquant Pepper 84  
Prof. Cutlery Dir. 83  
Redi-Base 84  
Replacements Ltd. 84  
Scottsdale Culinary 79  
Seafood Direct 81  
Selections 82  
ShawGuides 83, 84  
Specialty Foods 75  
Spec. by Louise 82  
Stafford's Wine 79  
Sullivan Coll. 84  
Suncoast Media 82  
Swisco Fds. 84  
The Connection 82  
Trenton Bldg. Lobster 75  
Trillium Intl. 84  
U. S. Personal Chef 79  
Victorian Cupboard 9  
WA Farmed Salmon 9  
Western Cul. 84  
Whole Earth Access 77  
Wilma Saxton 83  
Windsor Vineyards 81  
Wusthof-Trident 17

## COVER RECIPES

Bangkok-Style Glass Noodles 25

Hot & Sour Soup 24

## APPETIZERS

Home-Smoked Fish 61-65

Lobster Cakes with Basil & Lobster Coulis 52-53

## BREADS & PIZZAS

Asparagus, Prosciutto & Fontina Pizza 29

Basic Pizza Dough 26

Shrimp, Mussels & Hot Pepper Pizza 29

Spinach, Mushroom & Blue Cheese Pizza 29

## CHEESE

Yogurt Cheese 46-47

## DESSERTS, CAKES & PASTRY

Basic Berry Filling (for shortcake) 68

Basic Shortcake Biscuits 67

Basic Whipped Cream 68

Cherry & White-Chocolate Mousse Shortcakes 69

Orange & Grand Marnier Shortcakes 69

Pineapple, Caramel & Roasted Macadamia Nut Shortcakes 69

## MAIN DISHES

### Fish/Shellfish

Lobster Cakes with Basil & Lobster Coulis 52-53

Sauté of Cod with Capers & Onions 33-34

Sauté of Monkfish with Ginger & Rum 34

Spicy Shrimp Salad 23

### Meats

Pork Satay with Peanut Dipping Sauce and Cucumber Salad 23-24

Stuffed Boneless Pork Loin 55-57

### Poultry

Jerky Turkey 45

### Vegetable

Crookneck Squash with Creole

Vegetable Stuffing 36-37

Roasted Eggplant with Shrimp & Basil 24-25

## PASTA

Bangkok-Style Glass Noodles 25

## PRESERVES

Blackberry or Raspberry Cheese 41

Cherry Cheese 41

Cranberry Cheese 41

Damson Cheese 41

Peach Butter 41

Plum Butter 41

Prune Butter 41

Tokay Grape Butter 40-41

## SALADS

Cucumber Salad 24

Spicy Shrimp Salad 23

## SAUCES, CONDIMENTS & SEASONINGS

Jamaican Jerk Rub 44-45

Lobster Coulis 53

Peanut Dipping Sauce 24

Tomato & Pink-Grapefruit Sauce 36-37

Worcestershire Sauce,  
Chamberlain's Enhanced 80

## SOUPS, STEWS & STOCKS

All-Purpose Vegetable Stock 37

Hot & Sour Soup 24

Lobster Chowder 53

Lobster Court Bouillon 52

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